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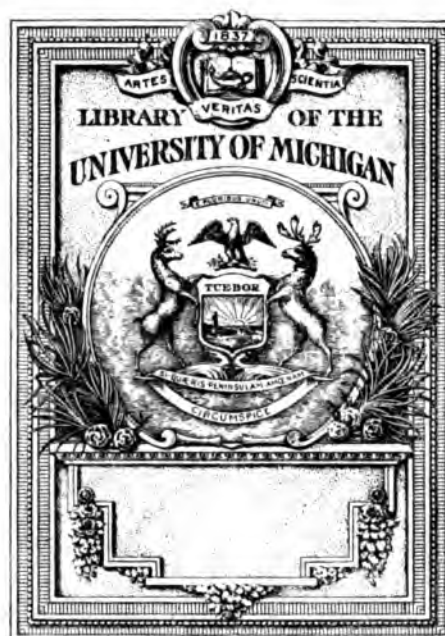
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ANCIENT GREEK COMIC  
INTRODUCTION  
II-IV MAGNA GRÆCIA  
BY  
FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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## VOLUME I

PART I. INTRODUCTION  
PARTS II-IV. MAGNA GRAECIA

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1900-1

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Out of these cabinets there smiles  
upon us an eternal spring of the  
blossoms and flowers of art.

— *Goethe's Italian Journey.*





# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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I

## INTRODUCTION

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON

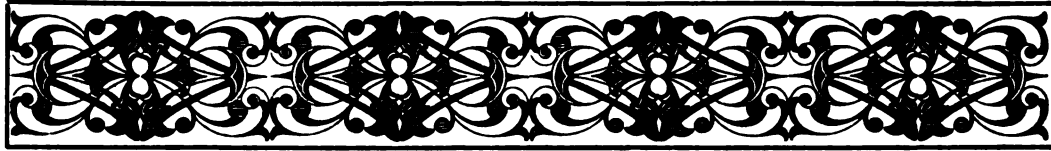


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"THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NUMISMATICS."



## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

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HERE are few subjects of research which offer such a variety of interests, and appeal to students of so widely differing tastes, as the coinage of the ancient Greek world. Not alone the professed numismatist, but the artist, the student of ancient Greek geography, history or mythology, the metrologist, each can find in this pursuit many features which will awaken and stimulate a new interest, or form an unexpected and welcome addition to some already acquired special knowledge.

To the numismatist, since the days of Petrarch the first coin collector of whom as such we have record, this branch of the science has always presented peculiar attractions. Here he can study a coin-series which, beginning with the rude bean-shaped productions of a few primitive dies in the earliest days of the invention, gradually improved in fabric and style, and expanded in scope and extent, until at last throughout the whole of the known world its varied and beautiful issues formed for centuries the only recognized medium of exchange.

Before the art-lover there is unfolded a succession of original bas-reliefs, which limited indeed by size and shape, yet reflect most clearly the salient characteristics of the great contemporary schools of sculpture and painting,

and display with a completeness possible in no other branch of art each subtle gradation, as the artistic Greek temperament ceaselessly strove for improvement in the visible expression of the beautiful. First come the rude forms of the archaic period ; then the stern, strong simplicity of the transitional age ; next the matchless grace and elaboration of ornament to be found in the periods of finest art ; and lastly the gradual but too evident weakness and debasement of the decline.

The student of geography finds that each Greek city small or great had its own mint, from which during its career of independent life there was issued an appropriate and characteristic coinage, the survival of which gives a touch of reality to what had otherwise perhaps been an empty name.

So too the historian of ancient days can discover in the study of issues struck by cities, kings or nations, some at irregular intervals, some during long centuries of existence, evidence supplementing or confirming statements which might, except for such corroboration, have seemed doubtful or incredible.

The lover of mythology can add to his knowledge of ancient cults from this rich storehouse of local myths and legends, which are here and in many cases here alone displayed, clearly or with an obscurity which but encourages enthusiastic investigation.

The metrologist can trace the routes of transmission of the early weight-standards from their common birthplace Babylon ; the so-called heavy standard by way of Phoenicia to Aigina and southern Europe ; the light standard through Ionia and Samos to Euboea, Corinth and Athens ; the intermediate standards by way of Phrygia into Thrace and Macedon. And he can engage in the interesting if complex task of investigating the causes of variation in these original standards as well as in those which prevailed at later periods, and of striving to reconcile with one another their manifold differences and the deteriorations peculiar to each.

On this most beautiful and instructive theme I propose, with the kind permission of the editors of the *American Journal of Numismatics*, to write a series of papers accompanied by plates of such specimens in my collection

of ancient Greek silver coins<sup>1</sup> as may seem to best illustrate the artistic and historical aspects. These articles will be addressed especially to such readers of the magazine as in their devotion to other branches have lacked the leisure or the opportunity to occupy themselves with the Greek series. Those on the contrary whose studies have taken this direction will doubtless find much that is already familiar, more particularly in the case of the better-known specimens; but such will be the first to admit that original work is difficult in a field to which such experts in numismatics and archaeology as Messrs. Imhoof-Blumer, Head, P. Gardner, Poole, A. J. Evans, Six, and others of little less celebrity, have devoted years of patient study and brilliant investigation. My great and constant indebtedness to their valuable and interesting writings must be here frankly confessed, as it will often be impossible to make such acknowledgment in the articles themselves.

Since in these papers it is intended to give a general and comprehensive view of the subject, examples have been chosen for the plates especially to this end, so that rare and common coins may chance to appear side by side; although naturally preference is given to rarities, as possessing greater interest for the expert. In all cases the specimens are in the highest attainable state of preservation, and of established genuineness.

Before entering upon the special descriptions which are to form a large part of these articles, I have thought best for the clearer comprehension of the various points considered, to give as briefly as possible a general sketch of the rise and progress of the art of coinage during the seven centuries before the Christian era.

After many vain attempts to reconcile conflicting authorities on the question, it is now generally agreed that to the Lydians belongs the credit for this most valuable invention, without which commerce could hardly have advanced beyond its primitive stage. In the commercial dealings of this progressive and prosperous nation the medium of exchange had long been elec-

<sup>1</sup> For the benefit of such readers as may wish to see the originals of coins figured on these plates, I shall add that about eight hundred specimens from my collection, systematically arranged and carefully labeled, have been and probably will be on exhibition for the greater part of each year in the Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, where they may be studied to great advantage.

trum, a natural alloy found in the river-beds of Lydia, and containing about three parts of gold to one of silver. Its hardness caused this metal to be in slight demand for the arts and manufactures, but made it especially suitable for use in the process of barter. The lumps of electrum circulating as they did by the slow and clumsy method of weighing, were for convenience cast into small, symmetrical, oval ingots. About the commencement of the seventh century B. C., the idea occurred to some official to impress on these a recognized stamp of authority, which should give by inference the nation's guarantee of weight and fineness. Their true value now being established, these pieces of metal could pass from hand to hand not by weight but by count, and they thus became coins in the true acceptation of the term.

Soon after the time that this simple but far-reaching evolution had taken place in Asia, Pheidon king of Argos introduced the invention to his countrymen the Greeks by striking, on the island of Aigina (probably in the sanctuary of Aphrodite, the protecting deity of commerce), the first silver coins, which bore the figure of a tortoise.

These early coins are very rude, having on the obverse alone a device or type, while on the reverse is the deep irregular indentation caused by the point of the punch, which under repeated blows of the hammer forced the blank down upon the die until the figured design was clearly defined. Naturally the presence of such a punch-mark is evidence of great antiquity, as the inventive and beauty-loving genius of the Greeks did not long rest content with this stage, but soon began to engrave dies for imprinting a type on each side of the coin; although for several centuries the reverse die, that on the punch, retained traces of its origin and purpose in the incuse square, which impressing at the first blow the blank, served to hold it firmly in place during the successive strokes. A development of the early punch-mark is seen in the so-called incuse coinage of Magna Graecia, which will be discussed in the paper on Italy.

From these two centres, Asiatic and European, this useful invention spread rapidly along the lines of travel followed on sea and land by the adventurous Phoenician traders, until by the beginning of the fifth century,

mints were in active operation in a large proportion of the autonomous cities with which Greek colonial enterprise or refusal, at any sacrifice, to accept the over-lordship of an Asiatic despot, had studded the shores and islands of the Mediterranean. Kings too of such states as Macedon and Persia issued coins for use in their dominions.

This right to an independent coinage was highly prized and jealously guarded by all free cities, whether large and powerful or possessing only a handful of citizens and ruling over but a few acres; and the copious issues from their numerous mints continued until the time of Alexander the Great, who speedily converted the vast hordes of treasure acquired by his successive conquests into a uniform currency, which soon superseded the local coinages, and bore to the furthest confines of the known world the effigies of his patron divinities Zeus and Herakles. It has been well said that if we had no other evidence of the victorious career of Alexander, we could infer the great extent of his dominions from the innumerable and widely diffused examples of his coinage which have survived to our day. In the same way the dissensions and divisions after his death could be deduced from the many fresh varieties of type characterizing the Greek issues whose style and fabric show them to be immediately posterior to the Alexandrine period. Each of Alexander's generals, who in the disintegration of his leader's vast empire appropriated a share and established an independent kingdom, at once issued a coinage of his own, with types peculiar to himself and his subjects.

Meanwhile in the west, tyrants and free cities continued to strike coins in their separate mints, and even in Asia an occasional civic issue is met with, until Rome's gradual but irresistible absorption of all independent life, of cities and kingdoms alike, terminated usually at once all local coinages; so that with the exception of the copious bronze issues sanctioned by the conquerors, the distinctively Greek series comes to an end shortly before the opening of the Christian era.

In that standard work, the only one embracing the entire subject, Dr. Head's "*Historia Numorum*," the value and importance of which cannot be too greatly extolled, this period of seven centuries has been divided, accord-



ing to artistic and historical affiliations, into six sub-periods which arrangement has been adopted for these papers, as seeming the most natural and logical of the various divisions of this kind. Since frequent reference must be made to this classification, it is here given in full, with brief allusions to the striking events and artistic characteristics of each period.

I. B. C. 700-480. *Period of Archaic Art.* From the invention of coinage to the Persian wars. Rule of the despots, and gradual development of democratic institutions into the independent cities which composed the Hellenic world. Its artistic features are extreme rudeness in detail and stiffness in form and feature.

II. B. C. 480-415. *Period of Transitional Art.* From the Persian wars to the Athenian siege of Syracuse. Settled predominance of the democracy in Hellas and the west, and establishment of the Athenian supremacy. Coins, feeling the impulse of growth in all other branches of art, become more refined and delicate, while the technical skill shown is far greater.

III. B. C. 415-336. *Period of Finest Art.* From the siege of Syracuse to the accession of Alexander the Great. Rule of Sparta, hegemony of Thebes, and conquests of Philip; in the west, the Dionysian dynasty and Timoleon. Dr. Head says "During this period the art of engraving coins reached the highest point of excellence which it has ever attained, either in ancient or modern times. The types are characterized by intensity of action, perfect symmetry of proportion, elegance of composition, finish of execution, and richness of ornamentation."

IV. B. C. 336-280. *Period of later Fine Art.* From the accession of Alexander to the death of Lysimachos. Conquests of Alexander, and division of his empire into separate kingdoms ruled by his generals; in Sicily, Agathokles. Coins are remarkable for the beauty and expression of the portrait heads, which now begin to replace the deities.

V. B. C. 280-146. *Period of the Decline of Art.* From the death of Lysimachos to the Roman conquest of Greece. Contests of the kings; Achaian League in Greece; in Sicily, Hieron; in Italy, Pyrrhos and the Han-

niballic war ; everywhere the gradual destruction by Rome of all independence. Regal coins predominate, showing marked degradation in style.

VI. B. C. 146-00. *Period of continued Decline in Art.* From the Roman conquest to the beginning of the Christian era. The Greek world becomes a collection of Roman provinces. Its coinage continues to show increasing debasement in art and fabric.

The most interesting feature of this coinage, that in fact in which it surpasses all others, is the variety and peculiar appropriateness of the types ; by which are meant the devices which impressed upon the coins distinguish them as belonging to the city, king or nation by whose authority they were issued.

It is now generally accepted since the able discussions of the question by Professors Curtius and P. Gardner, that the early coin-types were strictly religious in character, with the evident intention of as it were appealing to the gods to guarantee a coin's purity of metal and accuracy of weight, thereby insuring its general and unquestioned circulation. It is probable too that as in the case of Pheidon, the first mints were set up in the sacred temple precincts, which in a state of general insecurity the deeply religious nature of the Greeks kept inviolable, and where consequently treasure of all kinds would be stored for safe keeping. The priests therefore controlled the first mints, but soon the independent cities and later the kings established minting places of their own, without however daring to make any change in the religious character of the coinage as shown in its types.

It was as a rule some local deity whose guarantee the city or nation thus invoked as by a solemn oath. Nor was such chosen at random, but would be one indisputably appropriate by reason of long and special association with the spot. The type would then take the form of some recognized symbol of this divinity, such as a tortoise for the Aphrodite of Aigina, a tripod for the Apollo of Kroton, an eagle for the Zeus of Akragas. At a later and more advanced period, that subsequent to the Persian wars, while such symbols still remain in constant use, we find more frequently the head or the

entire figure of the god or goddess; Pallas Athene at Athens, Corinth, or Thourioi; Apollo at Katana, Amphipolis, or Klazomenai; Zeus and Hera at Elis; Poseidon at Poseidonia, or Priansos; Hermes at Ainos; Persephone at Syracuse; Dionysos at Naxos; together with many lesser divinities, actually or symbolically portrayed; river-gods at Gela or Selinous; nymphs at Syracuse, Terina, Himera or Larisa; local heroes at Taras, Syracuse, or Lokroi Opountioi. An apparent exception, the so-called agonistic type, wherein is symbolized by Nike-crowned quadriga or racehorse, some victory in the Olympic or one of the other great games, is really religious; all of these contests partaking of the nature of solemn festivals held in honor of the tutelary god.

Such, rude at first but as time advanced idealized and refined into the most beautiful specimens of numismatic art, the types continued until after the reign of Alexander the Great; who in spite of his great conquests and greater schemes, his belief in his descent from Zeus Ammon, and his assumption of divine honors, still did not venture to alter this religious characteristic of the types, and seemed to take pride in showing on his coinage the dedication of his life and ambitions to Zeus and Herakles. After his death however all this is changed. His followers, after the division of his kingdom among them, looking back upon his magnificent achievements, felt more and more inclined to regard such unbroken success as of divine origin, and carried his worship still further, giving him a recognized position in the Greek Pantheon, and placing on their own coin-issues the head of their leader deified as Zeus Ammon.

Soon the next step was taken, and the obverses of coins struck from this time onward show the heads of victorious kings and their queens, thus forming a gallery of authentic contemporary portraits; while the gods are impiously relegated, in the general diffusion of religious disbelief, to the less honorable reverse sides.

Of this character, with varied changes in royal effigies or in the emblems of religious cults, were the prevailing types during the remainder of the period of Greek coinage.

A word must be said as to the inscriptions, which apart from their epigraphic interest, give to coins the greatest importance from one point of view of art, determining as they do with few exceptions simply and finally the exact place of production of each coin. It is owing to this circumstance that coins are of far higher value than any other class of ancient remains, such as sculpture whether in the round or relief, terra-cotta vases, or gems, in the task of differentiating clearly the various characteristics and peculiarities of local schools of art; a study which until the scientific classification of coins, had always been attended by unavoidable uncertainties and irreconcilable contradictions. On the earliest coins there is either no inscription or else this takes the simple form of the initial letter of the city or state, Τ for Teos, Θ for Thebes. Next appear abbreviations of the name, ΑΙΓΙ for Aigina, ΑΘΕ for Athens, ΣΥΡΑ for Syracuse. Later, when the full name of the city is given, the inscription except in a few instances takes the form of the genitive plural of the name of the inhabitants, ΣΥΡΑΚΟΞΙΩΝ for Syracuse, ΑΒΔΗΡΗΤΕΩΝ for Abdera; and in the regal series the genitive of the king's name, ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ for Alexander; or with the royal title prefixed, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ for Lysimachos. During the final period the inscription becomes more elaborate, setting forth in addition the divine titles of the ruler.

Other interesting features to be found in this coinage, such as symbols, by which are meant smaller designs accompanying the main device or type, artists' signatures, magistrates' names, and alliance coins, will be considered as examples appear.

For the information of those to whom this subject is entirely new I must state briefly the denominations of this series of coins. There were two systems in use. In one, slightly the earlier, the standard of value was as its name implies, the stater, a coin varying in weight, according to the weight-standard locally followed, from 194 down to 112 grains.<sup>1</sup> The distater was double this weight; while the divisions of the stater were the half-stater, the third, the sixth, and the twelfth; the latter weighing from 16 to 10 grains. In the other system the standard, corresponding to the stater in weight and

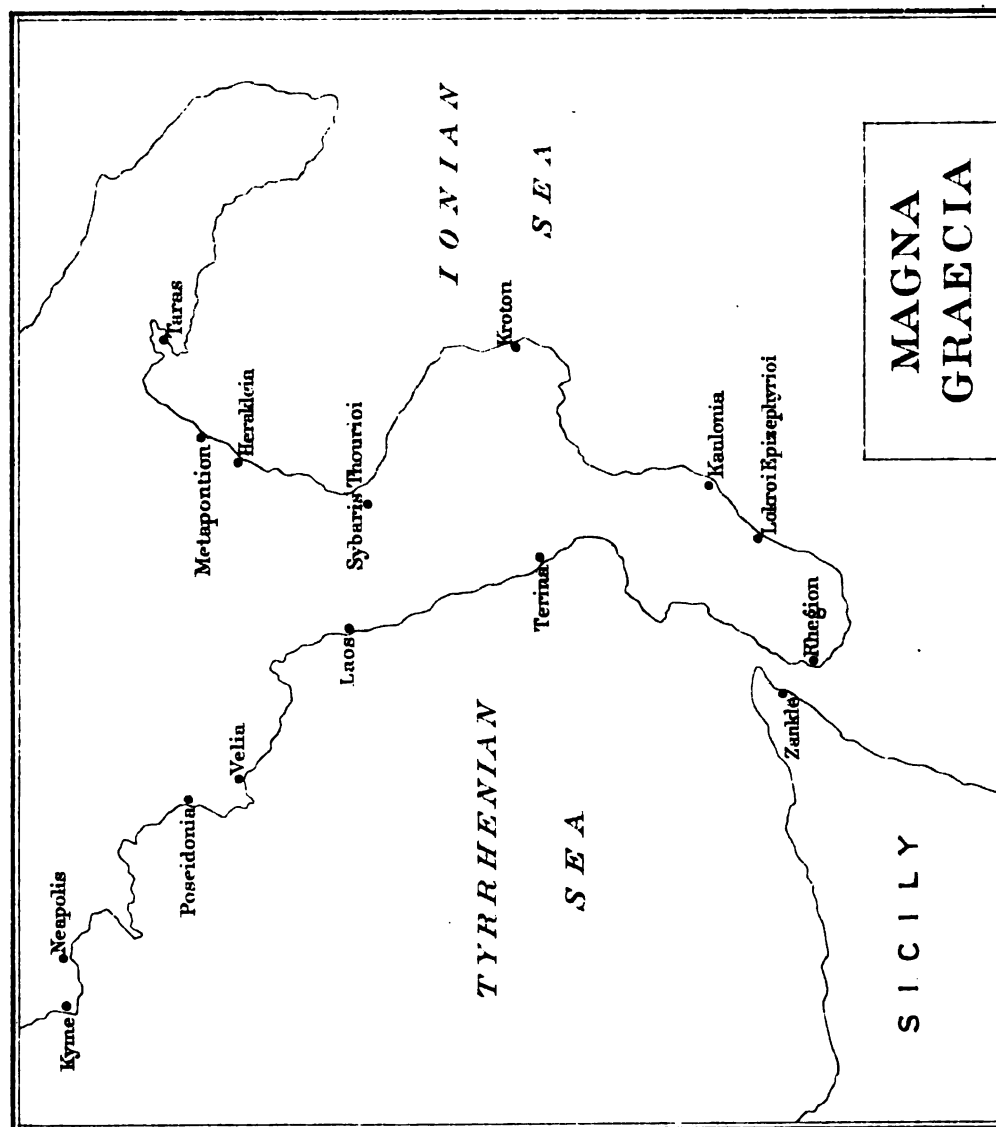
<sup>1</sup> For the sake of a modern comparison we may take the American fifty-cent piece, weighing about 193 grains.

size, was the didrachm, the multiples of which were the tetradrachm, the dekadrachm, and the dodekadrachm ; while its fractional parts were the drachm, tetrobol, triobol, diobol, and obol, a piece in size and weight similar to the twelfth-stater. The reasons which determined a city's adoption of one rather than the other of these systems have never been fully explained ; various elements, such as racial affinities, colonial traditions, and commercial alliances must all have been influential in differing degrees. There appears also to have existed a certain amount of confusion in the local use of these terms, which in some places were apparently interchangeable, while in others the stater corresponded to the tetradrachm, which was the standard. But these are the few exceptions, and the custom was as above described.

The order of the proposed articles will be in accordance with the arrangement of my collection, being that introduced by Eckhel and followed in the " *Historia Numorum* " as well as in most public and private cabinets. In this system first are grouped coins of countries at the western extremity of the Mediterranean, next those of its northern coasts extending to and including Asia, and lastly those along the southern shore of this great inland sea, until its western end is again reached. The Greek coinage of Spain and Gaul being of comparatively slight importance, my initial paper will be devoted to Italy, and we shall now proceed to examine some coins of Magna Graecia, as was termed that portion of the Latin peninsula, which colonized by the Greeks early became an important factor in Hellenic progress and culture.







# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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II

MAGNA GRAECIA

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1900





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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

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**I**N South Italy the archaic coinage was of such peculiar fabric as to form a class by itself, and this paper is devoted to a consideration of its interesting characteristics. Before entering upon this subject, however, we must briefly consider two important features of the general theme, which properly should have formed part of the introductory remarks in the preceding article.

The first regards the artistic qualities of coin-types. We should, in judging these, picture to ourselves the conditions which prevailed in other branches of art at the date of a coin's production. A rude specimen of the archaic period must not be harshly judged by a comparison with the bas-reliefs of Pheidias, nor should types contemporary with those master die-engravers Euainetos and Kimon be commended only because they show no trace of the sensationalism of the Hellenistic age. A most interesting phase of this artistic side of coinage, namely, the effect of the sister arts upon coin-engraving, has been brought out by Mr. R. S. Poole, who, in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1864, first called attention to the fact that coins, considered as works of art, naturally fall into five clearly defined divisions or schools, each showing the marked imprint of some strong external influence. The coins of Hellas (including in this designation Greece proper, Macedon and Thrace) are sculpturesque in character; the archaic examples repeating the marked peculiarities of early statues, and the coins of finest art showing all

the qualities of strength, repose and dignity which distinguish the best periods of sculpture. As was to be expected, however, in those days of slow and perilous communication, rendered yet more difficult by the selfish individualism of the petty states which composed the Greek world, the successive improvements in sculpture disseminated their influence only gradually, and we find that nowhere in coin-art does the corresponding progress make its appearance until about a generation after the changes in the sister and exemplar branch.

The home of painting at its best was Ionia, and here great painters such as Zeuxis and Apelles exercised an equally powerful artistic ascendancy over coin-engravers ; one, however, not so evident as in the case of sculpture, owing to the almost complete destruction of all remains of Greek pictorial art ; but still to be traced in the greater attention to detail and accessory, in disordered locks, and draperies tossed by the wind.

In the west, in Italy and Sicily, whence no remains either of painting or of original sculpture have come down to us, another art attained perfection, that of gem-engraving, the characteristics of which — a high degree of skill in technique, a certain hardness in feature, and a sharpness in detail — are all reflected in the charming coins of Magna Graecia and Trinakria.

The school of Crete, entirely out of touch with the artistic world, derived its inspiration from nature, and, discarding all conventionalities, revelled in a free naturalism ; while in further Asia architecture was the medium of artistic expression, and its coins display all the distinctive features of architectonic art, straight lines, stiff figures, and a universal formalism.

But to return to our proper critical attitude. After having determined this, we must also take into account the multiplicity of chances against the production of a perfect coin. With none of the delicate modern appliances which turn out automatically piece after piece of uniform mechanical perfection, the Greek moneyer, placing his heated metal blank of only an approximately correct shape and weight between the obverse die sunk in an anvil, and the reverse die attached to the end of an iron bar, impressed with blows of a heavy hammer a design upon each side of the then finished coin.

It can be easily imagined how many errors could thus result. The blank was probably not placed exactly in the centre of one or the other die ; the bar containing the upper die might rebound between the blows, causing "double striking ;" a die might be worn or oxidized ; or the disc of metal might split beneath such a sudden shock. And even if it escaped all these chances of imperfection, the coin as we see it now may have been subjected to various kinds of ill-treatment while in circulation, and then may have lain for centuries exposed to the corrosive action of lava or of the earth. So that we must in most instances try to consider each coin in a mood of sympathetic imagination, which will not only bring it before us in all its freshness, but will also enable us to understand the spirit and intent of the engraver ; who perhaps, too, at times felt himself hampered by the narrow bounds and unvarying shape of his field, which limited not only his choice of subjects but also his treatment of many designs which were in constant use. The student, moreover, will find, especially should he have opportunities of examining and handling many specimens, that these very irregularities and uncertainties, giving as they do a character and an individuality to each coin, will but increase the subtle and powerful charm of this series.

The second point I would emphasize is my method of writing names of Greek deities, places and kings ; which consists in transliterating them as closely as possible from the original. That this is not the general practice of English writers on numismatics must be admitted ; but that it is the correct system, and that its use is increasing year by year, cannot be denied. There certainly seems no good reason why the Latinized name-forms, made unfortunately so familiar by the conservatism or indifference of past generations, should continue to be impressed upon divinities which were worshipped by Greeks from the days before Homer to the introduction of Christianity, upon kings whose dynasties and subjects gloried in their unmixed Greek descent, and upon cities which as Greek foundations attained the height of their power and magnificence while the petty dominion of Rome was still confined to her seven hills. The more scientific modern method has long been followed by the Germans, and the complete publication, under the auspices of

the Berlin Academy of Sciences, of the *Corpus Numorum* (the first half volume of which has just appeared) will doubtless establish this use among all students and writers on the subject, whatever their nationality. Meanwhile, Dr. Imhoof-Blumer's various numismatic works, and Freeman's *History of Sicily*, have been the standards for my own transliterations. In only a few instances, preferring to appear inconsistent rather than pedantic, have I retained well-known names such as Athens, Syracuse, Alexander the Great, Croesus, etc., which have become part of our English tongue. The reader of these pages will find with surprise that the, at first sight, strange forms will rapidly become familiar, and that their constant use will then assist greatly in the production of a pure Hellenic atmosphere,—so important a condition for the congenial study and true enjoyment of these coins.

The lofty chain of the Apennines, extending throughout the length of Italy, at its southern extremity enters a peninsula so contracted that the spurs, foothills and included valleys touch on the one side the Tyrrhenian sea, and on the other the Ionian. The varied conditions thus presented,—a coast line bathed by waters teeming with many varieties of fish, rich valleys suitable for cultivation, rolling hills affording plentiful pasturage for flocks, and rugged mountains abounding in valuable timber,—combine to form a country peculiarly adapted to sustain a numerous and flourishing population.

Thus it was not strange that the colonizing ardor of the Greeks, which about the middle of the eighth century B. C. established one after another town on the Sicilian coast, should have, shortly afterwards, extended its field to the shores of the adjacent mainland, where Achaïans, Dorians and Ionians vied with one another in founding colonies, the wealth and enterprise of which should keep alive and extend the traditions and commerce of the mother races. In Italy the earliest results of this spirit of enterprise were the towns of Sybaris (founded B. C. 720) and Kroton (ten years later); examples which were followed during the course of the next century by a regular succession of settlements, either direct foundations from the mother country,

or offshoots from some already firmly established colony, eager to occupy certain spots which appeared in its eyes of peculiar importance. Rhegion, Taras, Lokroi Epizephyrioi, Kaulonia and Elea were of the former class ; of the latter were Metapontion, Poseidonia, Laos and Terina.

These towns, especially Kroton, Sybaris, Taras and Metapontion, in the course of the second century after their foundation, attained the highest point of wealth, luxury and refinement then visible in the Greek world. In fact they so far outshone the cities of old Greece, which had not yet reached their full splendor, that even before the time of Pythagoras the name *Magna Graecia* had seemed an appropriate designation for that portion of Italy which embraced the territory wholly subject to Hellenic influences : a region which a glance at the accompanying map will show to have extended as far north as a line drawn east from Kyme.

The arrival of the creator and expounder of the Pythagorean philosophy at Kroton about 535 B. C., and the rapid dissemination of his politico-religious doctrines in this and adjacent cities, gave a fresh impulse to their progress, and cemented still more closely the bonds of a general confederation, which, having been entered into for purposes of commerce and of mutual protection, was at that date, to judge from the testimony of coins, already firmly established.

The early commerce of this League must have been carried on by means of Corinthian coins, which were freely circulating then, as in fact was the case for several succeeding centuries, throughout the entire western part of the Greek world. But in the middle of the sixth century a uniform and distinctive confederate coinage makes its appearance, the characteristics of which are a thin, broadly-spread fabric, and a marked peculiarity in the method of impressing the type. This device, while the same on both sides, and in the usual relief on the obverse, is, on the reverse, sunken or *incuse*, but facing in the opposite direction ; an arrangement producing the effect of repoussé work. It was doubtless the natural aptitude of the Italian Greeks for this latter class of metal work, acting upon and perfecting the elaborate incuse square of the current Corinthian coins, which evolved these

distinctive issues, to which has been given the appropriate name of *incuse coinage*.

The copious issues of this character produced in Magna Graecia during the latter half of the peaceful sixth century would alone attest the populousness and commercial prosperity of its cities; while the total absence of political dissensions and the unbroken monotony of civic life are reflected in the uniformity of the issues, each of which continues with little variation during the entire period of this peculiar style. The first interruption of this state of tranquillity was the war in 510 B. C., between Kroton and Sybaris, which terminated in the destruction of the latter; after which event the resultant dissensions among the remaining cities caused the gradual decline of the League in power and influence. Thus we may consider B. C. 480 as the final limit of production for the incuse issues, which are then superseded by those of the conventional model in which both sides appear in relief.

The coinage of the League being a federal one, uniformity, as well in weight as in fabric, was essential, and we find prevailing the familiar Corinthian standard, slightly reduced, so that the stater weighed about 126 grains. The few exceptions were in the case of towns strongly influenced by local surroundings, such as Poseidonia, where the standard was the lighter one of the neighboring district of Campania.

In considering the artistic merits of these coins of the archaic period we should make comparison, as has been said, with other extant art products of those early days. We find the same crude mannerisms as in the case of primitive sculpture (notably the bas-reliefs of the Selinountian metopes) and of vases. The figures are stiff and angular, at times almost to grotesqueness; and the body between the neck and waist is facing, although the rest of the figure is in profile. Similarly the eye of side-faces is given in full, as though gazing towards one; while the hair is represented by minute dots. But at the same time there are often visible during this period, though, perhaps, as we shall see, more clearly elsewhere than in Magna Graecia, elements

of strength and originality which are rare even in days of greater artistic refinement. Then, too, the earliest examples of these incuse series are far from showing any trace of the rudeness visible in first efforts in coinage further east, made, however, it should be added, at an earlier date. The rough incuse punch-mark there characteristic of the archaic period is of course wholly wanting; the dies are clearly and strongly cut; and it is obvious that unusual care must have been exercised in the process of striking each coin, the difficulty of which is apparent when we consider the precise harmony of position in which the dies had to be placed.

We are now prepared to study in detail the examples on Plate I.

TARAS (CALABRIA).

1. Didrachm, wt. 125 grs. B. C. 550-520. (Pl. I: 1.) Obv.  $\Sigma$ APAT (archaic forms). Taras riding on dolphin to right; beneath, cockle-shell: guilloche border. Rev. TAPA (in raised letters). Same type, incuse, to left: border of radiating lines.

(From the Bunbury sale.)

An early tradition recounts that Taras, son of Poseidon, being shipwrecked, was miraculously saved from death by being borne to shore on the back of a dolphin opportunely sent to his succor by the vigilant ruler of the waves. On the spot where he landed the grateful hero established a colony, which, perpetuating his name, eventually became one of the most powerful cities of Magna Graecia. It was but natural that this striking event in the life of their mythical founder should have been chosen by the Tarentines as the type of their earliest coinage; a choice so fitting and appropriate that this graceful and pleasing group continued uninterruptedly as an obverse or reverse type of the city for the three and one-half centuries of its independent coinage. Similar stories were told of the poet Arion and of Melkarth, the tutelary god of Tyre, and possibly the grouping of the figures on the coin may have been suggested by well-known dedicatory statues commemorative of these latter legends. The charming symbolism of the Greeks shows us by a cockle-shell that the dolphin is approaching the land with his burden;



while the influence of orientalism on early Greek art is clearly shown by the border, of which the design, a favorite one for the issues of the incuse series, is of a distinctly Assyrian origin. The inscription  $\Sigma$ APAT exhibits an interesting and, on early coins, not uncommon survival of the method of writing from right to left, which the Greeks received, together with the alphabet and the graphic art itself, from the Phoenicians. Professor Curtius has advanced the theory that the change of direction which was early made in Greek writing was due to the influence of the priests, who first wrote towards the right in the sacred formulae; that being the side from which the Greek sought favorable omens in religious observances, and good fortune in all the ordinary avocations of life.

In contrast to the incuse issues of other populous cities of the League, these coins are of extreme rarity, which shows that the change to a type in relief on both sides took place much earlier here than elsewhere in Magna Graecia. In fact, the evidence of two important "finds" would lead to the conclusion that this incuse type was abandoned about 520 B. C. It is probable that Taras as a Dorian settlement always maintained intimate relations with the mother city Sparta, and that she never had a very close alliance with the confederation, composed as it was principally of Achaian towns.

#### METAPONTION (LUCANIA).

2. Stater, wt. 126 grs. B. C. 550-480. (Pl. I : 2.) Obv.  $\text{META}\Gamma$  Ear of barley. Rev. Same type, incuse.

(From the Trist sale.)

The productiveness of the Metapontine plain, remarkable even in this fertile region, gained a world-wide celebrity from the city's dedication at Delphi of a "golden harvest," probably in grateful recognition of a succession of prosperous seasons.

An ear of barley, perhaps already connected with some religious observance in honor of Demeter, naturally became the fitting type of the first coin-

age ; and this simple device, an ever-present reminder of her golden sheaves, continued during three centuries of prosperous independence to distinguish Metapontion, supplementing as secondary type the varied and charming obverse designs which succeeded one another in copious issues.

## KROTON (BRUTII).

3. Stater, wt. 120 grs. B. C. 550-480. (Pl. I : 3.) Obv. ὨΡΟ (archaic forms) Tripod with legs ending in lions' feet ; surmounted by two serpents' heads : guilloche border. Rev. Same type, incuse : border of radiating lines.

The tripod was the peculiar emblem of the Pythian Apollo, and became therefore the appropriate type for a city founded in obedience to a positive and twice-given command of the priestess of Delphi. Since representations of the tripod on all classes of ancient remains take this shape, with more or less elaboration of ornament, we can feel that we have before us an almost exact copy of the sacred seat from which the pythoness poured forth her inspired utterances.

In Kroton, the adopted home of Pythagoras, were established his most flourishing schools of religion and philosophy. At a subsequent period these became contaminated by the admixture of principles of political ambition, which, together with the attitude of haughty exclusiveness adopted by members, occasioned the later unpopularity and eventual overthrow of the brotherhood. But in their early days these societies exercised a powerful influence for good ; and the teachings which inculcated in her citizens principles of temperance, self-denial and uprightness, were potent factors in giving Kroton the predominant position she occupied among the cities of Magna Graecia. Thus it was owing to the Pythagorean doctrines that at a critical period of her existence Kroton was rescued from those habits of luxurious ease and effeminate self-indulgence which were sapping the vitality of Sybaris, her only successful rival ; and that she was enabled, when in 510 B. C. there came the inevitable struggle for supremacy, to achieve a victory so decisive and overwhelming that every trace of the extent and populousness of Sybaris was swept away.

Intimately associated with the Pythagoreans was the tripod, representing to them the mystic number three, which was invested by the members of this brotherhood with an esoteric meaning. The snakes rearing their hissing heads suggest the huge serpent Python, which, while the oracle of Delphi was in the hands of Gaia, guarded the sacred chasm until slain by the arrows of Apollo.

In the inscription the ϣ (koppa, the old Phoenician form of κ), at first used naturally, as in all classes of early writing, was, long after its disappearance as a letter from the revised Greek alphabet, retained on these coins, partly for commercial reasons, partly from sentiment, becoming the *episemon* or badge of the city. We shall see that this use was constant down to the end of the fifth century, when the Ionic forms Ω and Η were introduced into Southern Italy.

As one would expect in the case of a city of such wealth and commercial prosperity, the coins of this and of the kindred civic issues are very numerous.

#### KROTON (BRUTTI).

4 Stater, wt. 119 grs. B. C. 550-480. (Pl. I: 4.) Obv. ϣPOTO (archaic forms). Tripod with legs ending in lions' feet: border of dots. Rev. Eagle, incuse, flying to right: border of radiating lines.

One of the comparatively few instances in these series where the incuse type of the reverse differs from the relief of the obverse. Such an arrangement, showing a distinct advance in design and technique, exemplifies an intermediate step between the simple incuse reverse and the type in double relief.

The representation of the eagle, a bird sacred to Zeus, shows that the worship of this god was not neglected by the Krotoniates; and it discloses again the Pythagorean influence, as the founder of this school claimed that the divine nature of his teachings was manifested by the companionship of an eagle sent down to him by Zeus himself.

## POSEIDONIA (LUCANIA).

5. Stater, wt. 115 grs. B. C. 550-480. (Pl. I: 5.) Obv. ΜΟΠ (·ΠΟΞ) Poseidon, naked but for chlamys, which hangs across his shoulders, advancing to right, and wielding trident: guilloche border. Rev. ΜΟΠ (·ΠΟΞ) Same type, incuse, to left.

The antiquity and magnificence of the temple of Poseidon, fortunately the best preserved of the three shrines which hallow the now deserted site of Poseidonia, attest the veneration in which its early inhabitants held this, their tutelary and eponymous god, whose worship was here carried on, during the few centuries of the city's free life, with the utmost pomp of the imposing Greek ceremonial.

In spite of its archaism, this figure of Poseidon displays vigor and action, while the wonderful preservation of the head exhibits — although, on account of its minuteness, not perhaps so clearly as in the case of the head of Apollo on the Kauloniate example — the archaic method of representing hair by clusters of clearly defined dots.

## KAULONIA (BRUTTI).

6. Stater, wt. 130 grs. B. C. 550-480. (Pl. I: 6.) Obv. ΚΑΥΑ (archaic forms). Naked male figure advancing to right, holding branch in right hand, and on extended left hand a small figure running to right, and bearing branch in each hand; on right, stag with head turned back: guilloche border. Rev. Same type, incuse, to left: border of radiating lines.

The obscurity of this design, so elaborate for the period, and so evidently intended to symbolize some religious cult or ceremony, has always invited conjecture on the part of students; and many hypotheses of great ingenuity and more or less plausibility have been advanced. That the larger figure is Apollo admits of little doubt; as also his being engaged in an act of purification. But uncertainty had always existed as to the significance of the small, running figure on Apollo's hand, until the publication of an interesting paper by Mr. Watkiss Lloyd in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1848.

After disposing of former suppositions, the writer proceeds to prove in an ingenious course of reasoning that Apollo, as is shown by his bearing the lustral branch, is here represented in his character of the god of health and purification; and that he is bringing to his aid for these ends the powerful influence of vapor-dispelling and life-giving breezes, personified in the small figure, whose winged feet (an important element in this hypothesis) symbolize its easy and rapid flight. Kaulonia was noted for the strength and prevalence of its winds, to which the remarkable healthfulness of the city was attributed; so that the conception preserved in this, at first sight inexplicable type, seems peculiarly appropriate.

SYBARIS (LUCANIA).

7. Stater, wt. 124 grs. B. C. 550-510. (Pl. I: 7.) Obv. VM (·ΞΥ) Bull standing to left, with head turned back: guilloche border. Rev. Same type, incuse, to right: incuse border of dots.

The wealth, luxury and magnificence, which have made the name of Sybaris proverbial for more than twenty-four centuries and in many languages, were in large part resultant, as has been shown by M. Lenormant, from a monopoly which the city enjoyed of the carrying traffic across the Bruttian peninsula, at the narrowest point of which it was situated. Its marts were centres of great activity, where the rich stuffs and precious potteries brought by the Greeks across the Ionian sea were exchanged for the native copper and iron work with which the Etruscan barks ventured down the western coast of Italy. Only another proof of this prosperity is presented by the copiousness of its coinage; a fact all the more remarkable when we consider that the destruction of the city by Kroton took place within a few decades of the introduction of this invention into Magna Graecia.

The bull is symbolical of the worship of Poseidon, and perhaps the unnatural position of the head may be the engraver's primitive solution of a problem, here first presented, of portraying an elongated figure of the largest permissible size upon a small, circular field. In furtherance of this idea, the

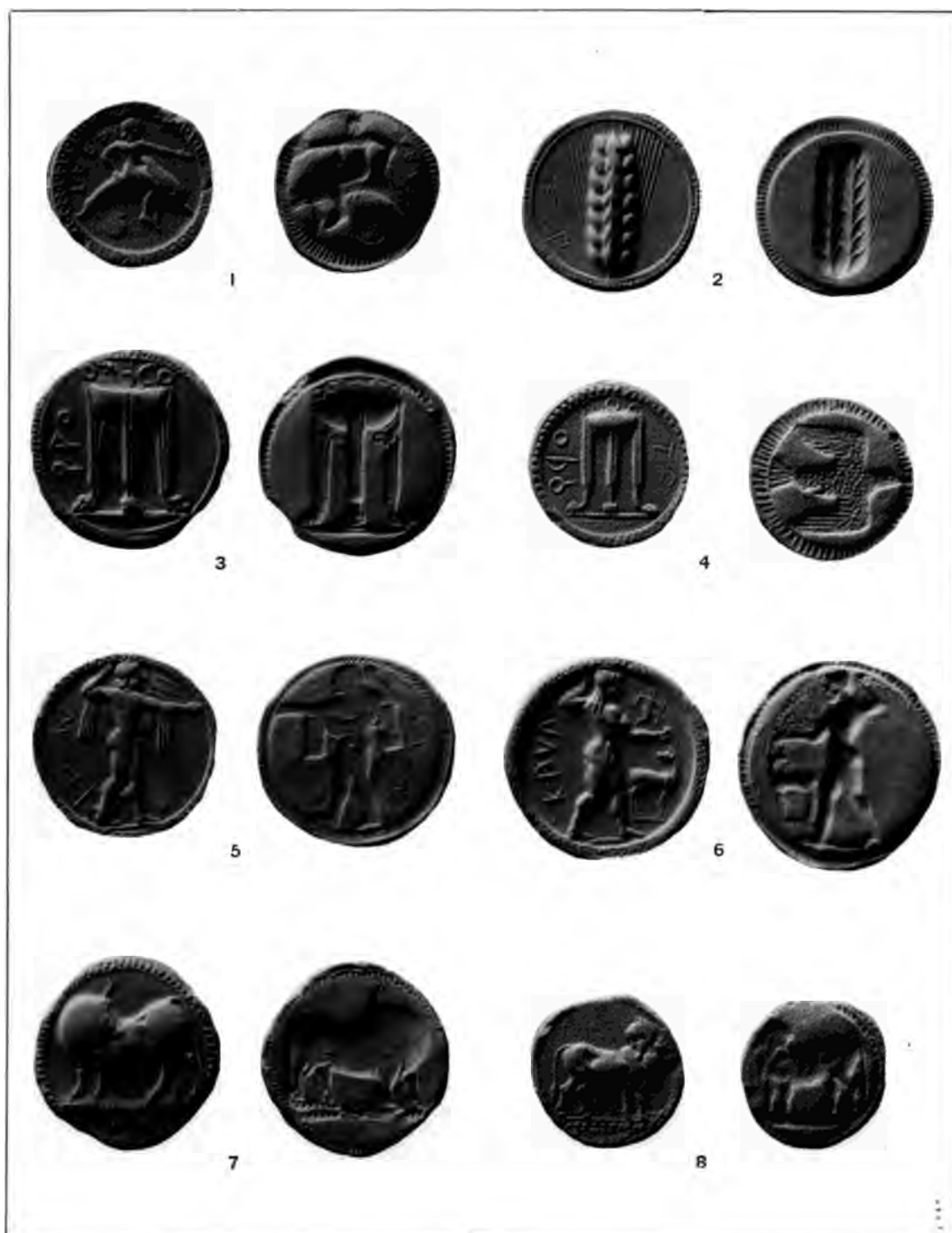
brief archaic inscription is placed in the exergue, a position most unusual at this period.

LAOS (LUCANIA).

8. Stater, wt. 118 grs. B. C. 550-500. (Pl. I : 8.) Obv. ΛΑΙ Man-headed bull, bearded and wearing helmet, standing to right, with head turned back : border and exergual line of dots. Rev. Same type, incuse, to left : raised wreath border.

This is interesting as displaying probably the earliest representation, on a coin, of the androcephalous bull, under which form an autochthonous deity, Dionysos Hebon, was very generally worshipped in Campania, whence his cult spread throughout the whole of Southern Italy. He was undoubtedly the tutelary god of Laos, and naturally became the type of its coinage. Before the date of this issue, however, the still earlier coins of Sybaris, by which city Laos had been colonized, must have circulated freely in the latter place, and the figure of the deity was so far influenced by this fact as to follow the familiar form with reverted head, peculiar to the mother city. Laos having been, especially in these early times, a city of slight importance, the issue was probably a small one, which would account for the rarity of these pieces.





ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.



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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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II\*

MAGNA GRAECIA

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1900



REPRINTED FROM  
"THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NUMISMATICS."



## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

### II.★ MAGNA GRAECIA.

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WE have seen that by the year 480 B. C. the peculiar incuse issues of Magna Graecia had come to an end, to be superseded by the normal type of coin — that in double relief — which thereafter remained in universal use. We should, however, before continuing our discussion of the Italiot coinage, take a brief survey of the course of events in these regions during the two succeeding centuries; by the end of which period the cities had ceased to be distinctively Greek, and the entire district, although still retaining its designation of Magna Graecia, had become a fixed and integral part of the Roman dominion.

The early half of the fifth century was distinguished by the rise and prosperity of Rhegion under the beneficent rule of the tyrant Anaxilas and his successors; as well as by a crushing defeat of the Tarentines at the hands of the neighboring native Messapians, the ancient enemies of Taras. Shortly after the middle of the century two important additions to the older foundations were made; the towns namely of Thourioi and Herakleia; the former an enterprise of colonists from old Greece, mainly Athenians, who repeopled the long-deserted site of ancient Sybaris; and the latter the result of a rivalry, between these Thourians and the inhabitants of reconstructed Taras, for a desirable site about equidistant from each; in which contest the Tarentines appear to have gained the upper hand.

The Peloponnesian war in old Greece, and the ill-fated Athenian expedition against Syracuse would seem to have awakened little interest in this group of cities, which remained strictly neutral. But the early years of the fourth century ushered in, for this smiling region, a long period of struggle, with alternations of victory and defeat, freedom and slavery. The bold, crafty and unscrupulous Dionysios, tyrant of Syracuse, after firmly riveting the chains of his own city, and of a large part of Sicily, turned his covetous eyes upon the mainland; where, by treachery, alliance, or,—these easier methods failing,—by courageous but pitiless warfare, he succeeded in the course of twenty years in making himself master of the greater part of Magna Graecia. The few Greek cities in the northwest, which he left in peace, speedily fell before a no less formidable power, the native Lucanians.

Even after his death a state of anarchy and confusion still prevailed, which the Tarentines attempted to terminate by calling to their aid in 332 B. C., King Alexander of Epeiros, whose tumultuous career would seem to have added but another element to the general condition of disorderly warfare. About the year 300 again appeared an ambitious and powerful Syracusan despot, Agathokles; of the nature and extent of whose important conquests in Italy however we know but little, owing to the loss of the ancient authorities for this period.

But the time had now come for the advent of the great and final actor in the drama. During two hundred years of constant strife, the republic of Rome had been expanding, contracting, and then again extending its boundaries; had been strong, then weak; and had once more flourished with renewed vigor. Wars with Etruscans, Celts, Latins, Volscians, Samnites, had produced a compact, warlike, powerful, progressive nation; to which in their distracted condition the feeble Greek cities looked for deliverance and peace; eagerly exchanging a useless and merely nominal freedom for the strong protection of a Roman garrison. Not indeed in all cases. For Taras, again preferring a foreign to a native yoke, summoned in 280 B. C. another Epeirot king, Pyrrhos,—among the most formidable in the long list of Rome's enemies. Once more events took their usual course; at first, success of the

invader; then long-continued and fruitless negotiations while Rome was gathering strength; and lastly, another stubbornly contested battle, in which the Roman victory was so decisive and overwhelming that Pyrrhos was forced to flee finally from Italy.

As a result, soon after, in 272 B. C., Taras was formally surrendered to the Romans; and the submission of Rhegion about the same time completed the Roman suzerainty of South Italy, hardly interrupted by a few scattered and futile efforts at rebellion during the Punic wars.

Events such as these,—dynasties overthrown by democratic outbursts, democracies subverted by crafty oligarchies, free cities trampled under foot by powerful tyrants,—left a marked imprint upon the various coinages. That of Taras, for example, the most copious perhaps of all, is capable of division into twelve clearly defined periods; while others, where the changes were less frequent and pronounced, such as Kroton and Metapontion, show five or six distinct types. Unfortunately space does not permit us to select even one of these cities and to follow the course of its history, as evidenced by successive coin-issues. For this we must wait until we come to examine the issues of Syracuse, the most important, from a numismatic standpoint, of all the cities of the Greek world,—in whatever aspect we consider coins, whether as historical monuments, as works of art, or as specimens of the growth and changing conditions of coinage.

Plates II–IV will show us coins of the transitional and the two fine-art periods, with an occasional glimpse into the period of decline; and although it has been impossible to make a chronological arrangement, a little practice should enable one to distinguish by its characteristic features the approximate date and the relative artistic status of each coin.

In the transitional age we still observe a certain amount of stiffness and a want of complete familiarity with the materials; defects which disappear as we approach the period of finest art, in which the technique has attained perfection; and strength, simplicity and divine repose are certain products of the skilled hand of the master.

As has been pointed out, the engravers of these Italiot coins were often also engravers of gems, and were thus accustomed to minute and delicate work; which perhaps prevented a broad, grand style such as we find in the case of the die-sinkers of old Greece, working under the benign influence of great sculptors. But if no attempt is made to enlarge these coins,—and it seems only fair to leave them of the size contemplated by the designer,—they must be admitted to show striking qualities of exquisite grace and simple beauty. In the period of decline we see evidences of the over-ornamentation, weakness and carelessness of execution, which perverting or crushing all healthy impulse towards freedom and simplicity, worked the degradation of the artistic element in coins; as indeed in all branches of Greek art-production.

POSEIDONIA (LUCANIA).

9. Stater, wt. 119 grs. B. C. 480–400. (Pl. II: 1.) Obv. ΔΙΕΞΟΝ Poseidon, naked but for chlamys, which hangs across his shoulders, wielding trident and standing to right on dolphin: border of dots. Rev. ΠΟΞΕΙΑ (*sic*) Bull standing to left on twisted cable, which terminates in small dolphin.

Comparing this obverse with the incuse example of Poseidonia (Plate I, 5) we see the same figure and posture of the city's tutelary god; a noticeable change, however, appearing in the increased smoothness and roundness of the body and limbs, with greater solidity and stockiness of the figure in general; characteristics which in Italy and Sicily distinguish transitional coins from those of the archaic period. Moreover in this later type Poseidon's mastery of the sea is charmingly suggested by his standing—and yet in a position of onward movement or attack—on the back of a dolphin, which seems to plunge over the waves as though proud of its divine burden. The naive surrender of early artist-engravers in the face of difficult problems in perspective is amusingly shown by the disappearance of the trident-handle behind the head. To appreciate the advance made in a century, one should compare with this the obverse of No. 4, below, where the three spears borne by the horseman are represented in their correct relative positions.

The bull on the reverse is one of the symbols of Poseidon, and the sea-idea is still further conveyed by its support, a ship's cable ending in a dolphin.

KAULONIA (BRUTTII).

10. Stater, wt. 120 grs. B. C. 480-388. (Pl. II: 2.) Obv. AVAK Apollo advancing to right, holding branch in right hand, and on extended left hand a small figure running to right and bearing branch in each hand; on right, stag with head turned back.

11. Stater, wt. 116 grs. B. C. 480-388. (Pl. II: 3.) Rev. Stag standing to right on plain and dotted lines; in front, fountain-basin, on which, bird with spread wings; magistrate's initials ΘΕ.

Throughout the whole of the fifth century this obverse device, a reproduction of the interesting archaic type of Kaulonia (Pl. I, 6) continued to distinguish the city, without change except in the increasing smoothness and roundness already noted as characteristic of this period.

The presence of the stag, as a symbol on the obverse, and as principal type of the reverse, would imply that to the worship of Apollo was added, by the Kaulonians, the cult of his sister Artemis. Even the site of Kaulonia is unknown; so that we have no remains of temples to corroborate this supposition, as in the case of Poseidonia.

The writer possesses a terra-cotta group belonging to the class popularly termed Tanagra statuettes, and dating from about the second century B. C. It represents a graceful lightly draped figure of Aphrodite standing beside a supported fountain-basin; which latter—allowance being made for the contracted space at the disposal of the die-sinker for his representation of a subsidiary device—is, in design and treatment, an almost exact counterpart of the charming accessory type of our reverse; there being, however, two birds (here the doves of Aphrodite) instead of one.

In like manner lovers and students of ancient remains will be at once reminded, by this type, of the group in mosaic known, from its present abiding place in Rome, as "The Capitoline Doves." The celebrated original,—a work of Sosos of Pergamon,—is described by Pliny as "a dove drinking,



and darkening the water by the shadow of its head; while other doves are sunning and pluming themselves on the rim of the basin." The interesting coincidence that the Italiot coin-engraver of the fifth century B. C., the Asian mosaicist of the third, and the Hellenic terra-cotta modeller of the second, should have chosen, and, within the imposed limits, have similarly treated this subject, evidences the realism of the type, and emphasizes the well-known love of the Greeks for pleasing natural objects.

This delight in nature appears throughout the coinage of Magna Graecia and Sicily, and especially in certain compositions on contemporary coins of Thourioi and Terina, which we shall study in a future paper; and which, as Mr. Evans has pointed out, bear an interesting "family likeness" to our secondary type.

This reverse is evidently of a somewhat later date than the obverse shown with it.

#### TARAS (CALABRIA).

12. Didrachm, wt. 122 grs. B. C. 330-302. (Pl. II: 4.) Obv. Naked horseman lancing downwards to right, holding, behind, round shield and two spears; engraver's signature ΔΑΙ. Rev. ΤΑΡΑΣ riding on dolphin to left, and holding trident and round shield, on which, hippocamp; beneath, purple-shell; engraver's signature ΦΙ.

This is the only example which our space allows us to give from the varied and copious series of Taras, known among numismatists as the "horsemen," a type symbolical of the celebrated Tarentine cavalry, so brilliant and deadly in its manoeuvres that *ταπαντίζειν* (to ride like a Tarentine) became a proverbial expression for equestrian skill.

After the incuse issue already described (Pl. I: 1) a few intermediate types bring us down to the year 450 B. C., assigned by Mr. A. J. Evans' as the earliest date for the appearance of this group; which was, in an endless variety of graceful, refined and yet vigorous attitudes to distinguish the abun-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Evans' scholarly and exhaustive work "The Horsemen of Tarentum" is the recognized authority on this subject, and must be freely consulted for any sketch such as the present.

dant coinage of Taras until 209 B. C., when the city's final subjugation by the Romans put an end, here as elsewhere, to independent issues.

The years 330-302 formed for the Tarentines one of their rare periods of political freedom and complete internal tranquility. King Alexander the Molossian, whom as already stated they had summoned in 332 to their aid against the encroaching Italian tribes, had indeed defeated all their foes, but only himself to threaten their freedom. Suddenly came the welcome news of his death before neighboring Pandosia; and then, after the discomfiture of all their enemies, and before the first of those ruinous conflicts which culminated in the Roman occupation, there elapsed a few triumphant years of old-time independence, which this issue commemorates.

Our coin is also representative of perhaps the most artistic period of this series, showing such mobility, freedom and animation in the treatment of the group as to recall the magnificent equestrian figures on the Parthenon frieze; in which also the rider's easy pose and perfect mastery of his steed are striking characteristics.

Turning to the reverse we can hardly recognize the stiff formal type of the archaic period in this harmonious, pleasing group which seems endowed with grace and energy. The relationship to Poseidon is manifested in each symbol — the trident which his son bears, the hippocamp on the shield, and the purple-shell; which latter while symbolizing also the staple industry of the city, would convey the idea that Taras is here sporting in the inner harbor which so abounded in these shell-fish.

The reasons for considering the initials —  $\Delta\Lambda$  on the obverse, and  $\Phi$  on the reverse — signatures of die-engravers, and not of local magistrates, will be given in the next paper.

#### CAMPANO-TARENTINE (TARAS).

13. Didrachm, wt. 112 grs. B. C. 272-235. (Pl. II : 5.) Obv. Head of nymph Satyra to left, diademed and wearing necklace. Rev. AT Youthful horseman to right, crowning his horse; beneath, dolphin.

(From the Montagu sale).

This coin, struck at Taras, is representative of a class of didrachms which, differing in design and weight from the typical series, were it is conjectured minted to provide a kind of federal coinage for use in the neighboring Apulian and other districts, where the Campanian weight-standard, followed by these coins, prevailed.

To compensate us for the absence of the familiar Taras group we have the head of the hero's mother, in character bearing a marked resemblance to the charming head of the goddess Dia-Hebe, which as we shall see formed the type of the copious coinage of Neapolis.

On the reverse we have the ever-present dolphin as a symbol; while the crowning of the horse by its boy-jockey probably refers to some success in the local hippodrome.

#### ELEA (LUCANIA).

14. Drachm, wt. 58 grs. B. C. 540-500. (Pl. II: 6.) Obv. Forepart of lion devouring the prey. Rev. Incuse square of "mill-sail" pattern.

A brief sketch of the historical events recalled by this coin cannot but prove of interest. Shortly after the middle of the sixth century the generals of Cyrus in pursuance of this great monarch's scheme for the complete conquest of Ionia and its absorption into the Persian empire, invested the flourishing sea-coast city of Phokaia; to whose inhabitants there were thus presented the alternatives of Persian slavery or flight to some distant land. Undisputed possessors, during the first half of that century, of the proud title "supreme upon the sea" (*θαλαττοκρατεῖν*), and still noted from end to end of the Mediterranean as intrepid navigators, the Phokaians naturally made the latter choice, and, after brief but stormy sojourns on the island of Corsica and at the city of Rhegion, founded the town of Elea (or Velia) and later that of Massalia in Gaul.

Tenacious of every reminder of their fair Ionic home-city, the exiles retained the type and fabric of its coins; and when finally established as citizens of flourishing towns, continued the familiar issues. This fact explains the discovery of coins bearing one and the same type, on the sites of Phokaia,



Elea and Massalia, and also accounts for the presence of the rude incuse square, almost universal on the archaic coinage of Hellas and Asia, and yet, with this solitary exception, unknown amid the *intaglio* reverses of Magna Graecia.

It should be mentioned that the weight-standard (a didrachm of 118 grs.) brought by the Phokaians from the east, was lighter than the Corinthian standard followed elsewhere in Magna Graecia; and that the persistent use by the Eleates of their own standard led to its spread and to its final and general adoption by the towns of the neighboring Campania; whence it is usually termed the Campanian standard.

ELEA (LUCANIA).

15. Didrachm, wt. 116 grs. B. C. 400-336. (Pl. II: 7.) Obv. Head of Pallas to left wearing crested Athenian helmet ornamented with griffin.

16. Didrachm, wt. 112 grs. B. C. 400-336. (Pl. II: 8.) Rev. YEA Lion seizing stag to left.

We know unfortunately little of the actual history of Elea; but it would seem that at a late period a body of fresh colonists from Thourioi was received into citizenship:—an event which would account for the appearance, on the coinage, of this head of Pallas, clearly suggested by the Thourian obverse type, which as we shall see was probably designed by Athenian die-engravers. M. Sambon would find in this helmeted device an allusion to the war-like character of the citizens, under the impulse of the first of those Lucanian incursions which lasted with little intermission during the fourth century; but which were all, it would seem, successfully repelled by the Eleates.

The same author, while admitting that the reverse type of a lion devouring a stag may have originally, in oriental fashion, symbolized the power of the sun over dampness, would incline to the belief that here again these conflicts are referred to, and that the successive triumphs of the Eleates are thus commemorated.

Little can be said, however, in praise of the artistic qualities of this weak reverse group; nor does the obverse head do more than faintly reflect the charm and simple power of its prototype.

ELEA (LUCANIA).

17. Didrachm, wt. 114 grs. B. C. 304-289. (Pl. II : 9.) Rev. YEΛHTΩN Lion prowling to left; above, triskelis with winged sandals; engraver's signature ΦΙ.

Here we still find, at a somewhat later date, the lion-type, with the figure in a predatory attitude; which, like the preceding group, must be symbolical of war-like alarms. Mr. Evans, as in the case of No. 12, Taras, considers ΦΙ the abbreviated signature of the well-known die-engraver Philistion, who on several Eleatic examples signs his name in full.

But what gives this reverse an exceptional interest is the presence of a triskelis, the accepted emblem of the triangular island of Sicily. We shall see under Syracuse that this symbol (bearing, in its birthplace the east, a solar signification alone) did not appear in the west until the reign of Agathokles (B. C. 317-289); who by placing it on Syracusan coins emphasized the assertion of his claim to the sovereignty, actual or nominal, over the whole island. But like the elder Dionysios, his predecessor in the tyranny, Agathokles was not content with this triumph; but sought by conquest and alliance to extend still further his dominion. His first attempt was made against the Carthaginians, and when after a period of varying fortunes he was forced to abandon Africa finally, with greater success he turned his efforts against men of his own race in the north and east, passing stormy years of battle and conquest in Magna Graecia; seizing Korkyra; and even by a marriage with a Macedonian princess allying himself to the royal successors of the great Alexander. Thus did Agathokles occupy the latter half of his reign, a period of which unfortunately we have few details, recorded as it is only in scattered fragments of the ancient historians. But even if Elea, whose history is likewise, as we have said, almost a blank, was not one of the direct conquests of the despot; may it not be more than probable that its

inhabitants, witnesses of the increasing dominion of the powerful "lord of the island," eagerly sought his firm alliance; and that in token of their good faith and the permanence of their friendship, they placed on contemporary coin-issues the triskelis, which had become the recognized symbol of their ally.

RHEGION (BRUTTI).

18. Tetradrachm, wt. 260 grs. B. C. 466-415. (Pl. II: 10.) Obv. Lion's head facing; on left, sprig of olive with fruit. Rev.  $\Sigma$ ONIGEP Male figure seated to left, supporting right hand on staff; beneath seat, a water-bird: the whole enclosed in olive-wreath.

(From the Bunbury sale).

19. Tetradrachm, wt. 266 grs. B. C. 466-415. (Pl. II: 11.) Rev.  $\Sigma$ ONIGHP Similar type, but on left, bunch of grapes.

(From the Bunbury sale).

The most influential portion of the early colonists of this Chalkidic town were Samian exiles; and one direct result of their ascendancy was that the coinage received for its obverse type a conventionalized copy of that distinctly Samian device, a lion's scalp. Although the original significance of this type is doubtful, it should probably be considered a symbol of Hera, to whose many-sided cult the island was wholly devoted.

Not so simple is the explanation of the reverse type; the seated figure having given rise to many able and learned discussions. The earliest interpretation was that he represented the Demos of the city, and that by this group the democracy celebrated the triumph of its principles, about ten years after the death of the old tyrant Anaxilas. Dr. Head, in the *Historia Numorum*, does not accept this explanation, preferring to see "a divinity of the nature of Agreus or Aristaios, the patron of rural life and pursuits." The symbol, a duck, under the seat, would tend to strengthen this view, towards which Mr. E. J. Seltman (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1897) also inclines, discussing the various arguments, for and against, in an unprejudiced and scholarly article.

A directly opposite position is that of M. Six, who in the same periodical for 1898 sets forth his reasons for considering the figure to represent the founder of the city, King Oikastos by name, whose death from a serpent-bite M. Six would see here portrayed. Mr. Seltman later easily disposes of this theory by showing that the serpent, which, in M. Six's opinion is twining around the leg of the seat and holding its head near the hand of its victim, is in reality a flaw resulting from carelessness on the part of the die-engraver. An examination of our specimen (Pl. II: 11), apparently an example from the same die, will show the correctness of Mr. Seltman's contention.

These two reverses exemplify the marked difference in style between coins of the early and of the closing years of the transitional period; while on the later coin the appearance of a cluster of grapes, a symbol of Aristaios, would confirm the wisdom of Dr. Head's position.

RHEGION (BRUTTI).

20. Tetradrachm, wt. 268 grs. B. C. 415-387. (Pl. II: 12.) Rev. PHΓINON  
Head of Apollo to right, wearing laurel-crown; behind, sprig of olive.

(From the Trist sale).

This type prevailed during the years in which Dionysios was maturing his long-cherished scheme to capture and annihilate the city; an arduous enterprise which was at last successfully accomplished in 387 B. C. in spite of the most heroic and determined resistance on the part of the Rhegines.

The wreath of laurel was everywhere intimately associated with the oracle of Apollo at Delphi; but it has been suggested that reference is here made to a custom connected with the temple of Apollo in Rhegion, a shrine by far the most celebrated of all in this city. Its votaries before starting on a pilgrimage to Delphi, were wont to pluck a few leaves in the sacred olive-grove which surrounded the holy fane, and to bear these carefully with them for presentation to the god.

METAPONTION (LUCANIA).

21. Stater, wt. 119 grs. B. C. 400-350. (Pl. II: 13.) Obv. Young male head to right, having ram's horn and ear.

(From the Montagu sale).

22. Stater, wt. 121 grs. B. C. 400–350. (Pl. II: 14.) Obv. Female head to right, wearing earring and necklace, hair turned up behind and bound with double fillet: the whole in wreath of olive.

(From the Montagu sale).

These two obverse types—the reverse of each being, as always, an ear of barley—are noble and charming examples of the fine-art period of Metapontine coinage. In the youthful male head we see Apollo Karneios (horned), the god of flocks and of the harvest, or at least the vintage,—in which latter character he would be highly esteemed by the Metapontines; or it may represent the Libyan Dionysos, who was indeed sometimes portrayed wholly in the form of a goat.

Below the neck of the female head the inscription ΥΓΙΕΙΑ (health) sometimes appears; probably one of the epithets of Demeter; here represented as the giver of health, in addition to the usual qualities which made her, as goddess of agriculture, an object of peculiar veneration in this fertile district.

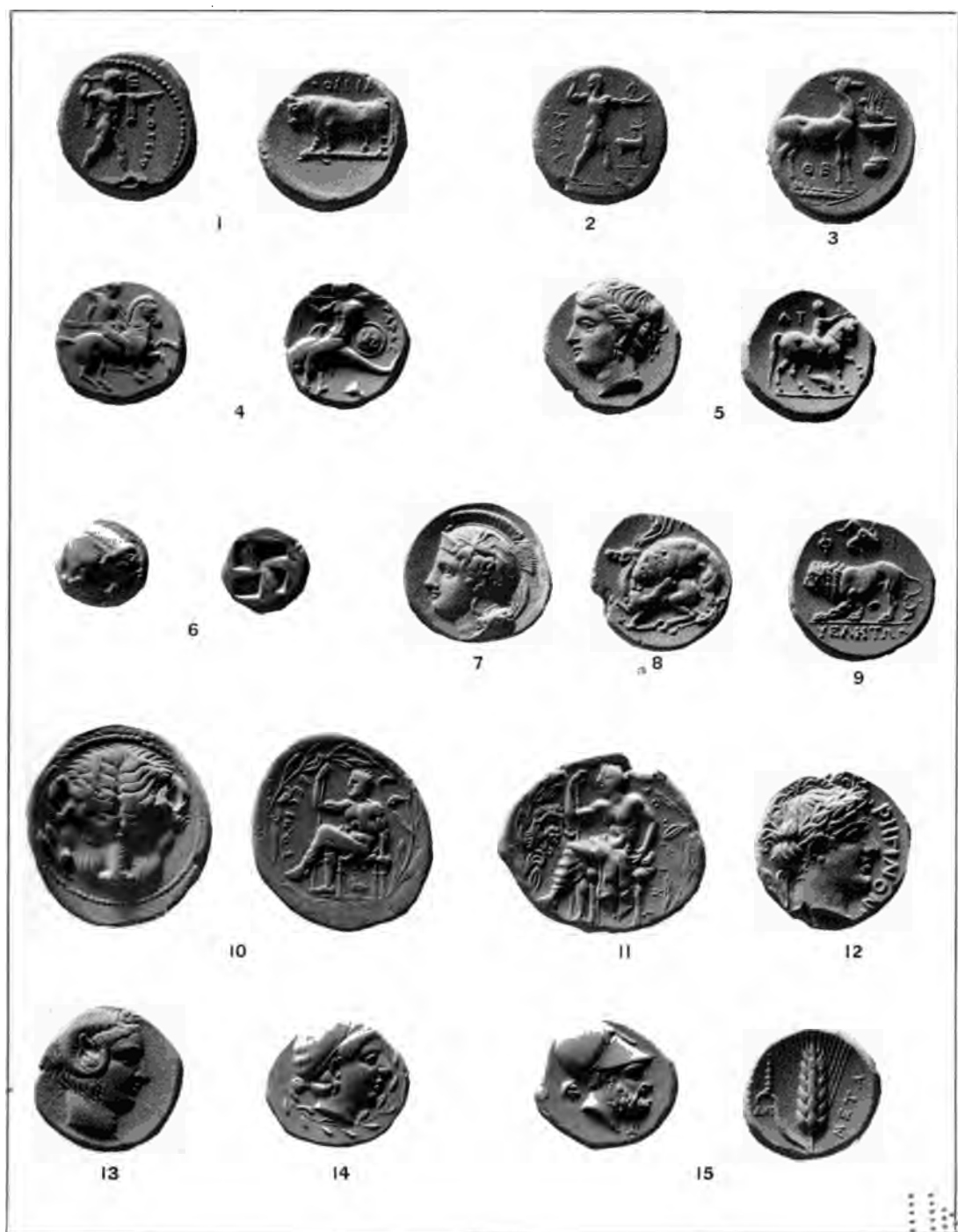
METAPONTION (LUCANIA).

23. Stater, wt. 121 grs. B. C. 350–330. (Pl. II: 15.) Obv. Head of Leukippos to right bearded, wearing Corinthian helmet; behind, lion's head, in front, monogram ΑΠ. Rev. META Ear of barley; on left, club and magistrate's name ΑΜΙ.

The Achaian Leukippos, the founder of Metapontion, raised by the grateful citizens to the company of heroes, was always revered with peculiar honors. The date of this coin coincides with the stirring days of Timoleon and the Molossian Alexander; and M. Sambon would consider this type as adopted for the purpose of stimulating the Metapontines to emulate the glorious deeds of their heroic ancestor, at a time when they themselves were face to face with perils which menaced the very existence of their republic. So, too, the symbols in the field, a lion's head and the club of Herakles, would influence in the same direction.







ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

24

# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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## III MAGNA GRAECIA

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BY  
FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



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1900



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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

### III. MAGNA GRAECIA.



IN our introductory remarks a brief description was given of the primitive process employed by the Greeks in striking their coins; an interesting subject, the details of which may with advantage be again considered, in connection with the somewhat uncertain question of die-cutting. We saw that the obverse die was sunk into the face of an anvil, and the corresponding reverse die attached to the lower end of a bar of iron. Between these two dies a prepared piece of metal, or "blank," heated to redness, was placed; and repeated blows of a heavy hammer upon the upper end of the bar produced the finished coin. That this was their simple and uncertain method, modified by slight improvements in the course of centuries, seems clear.

But as to the tools and materials used in the production of these dies there still remains a certain amount of doubt, in spite of persevering research and clever conjecture.

Since the practice of gem engraving antedated by many centuries the invention of the cognate glyptic art of die-cutting, it is probable that the improvements gradually evolved in implements and technique of the former, were speedily appropriated by workers in the sister branch. But in contrast to the hard, brittle stone which had to be laboriously engraved by the gem-expert, the material upon which the coin-artist exercised his skill was some soft, malleable metal, probably bronze. Its softness is shown by the facility with which dies seem to have been cut, and by the equal facility, unfortunately, with which they were injuriously affected by rough usage or action of the elements. There are many evidences of this peculiar liability to injury; such as, that no example of an ancient Greek coin-die has come down to us; that, in some otherwise well-preserved coins, there is a want of sharpness which can be only the result of a rapid wear of the die; that we also frequently find in coins defects due to corrosion or fracture of their dies; and that two coins from the same die so rarely appear that the few instances of such occurrence are always deemed worthy of note. Again, the many varieties of a single type from the hand of one artist, as well as certain issues of emergency show that ancient dies must have been produced with an ease and rapidity incomprehensible in our day, when the cutting of one die in the hardened steel may consume months. These old coin-engravers, however, from constant practice in this rapid production of dies doubtless acquired a wonderful facility; degenerating in some cases, it must be confessed, into carelessness and indifference.

If an Egyptian wall-painting be rightly interpreted, it seems certain that at an early date, centuries in fact before the appearance of coinage, the graver's wheel was in use among workers in gold, and inferentially among gem-engravers. This tool appears to have been, in principle, the same as at the present day. On a spindle there was mounted a minute copper disk, which moistened in a mixture of oil and diamond dust would when whirled with rapidity, speedily cut into gems, gold, or — after its adaptation (probably immediate) to the invention of coinage — with even greater ease into the soft metal used for dies. It is conjectured that with this wheel the design

was roughly cut out, and that for the more minute and delicate work the jeweller's fixed point was used; in finishing with which the engraver removed all trace of the bosses produced by the coarser implement. Not always, however; for we have seen that on early coins hair is represented, after the archaic model of statuary, by clearly defined dots; while at a later period these bosses seem purposely left on the lettering of inscriptions.

A charming feature, which adds greatly to the interest of the coinages of Magna Graecia and Sicily — found moreover with one or two exceptions nowhere else in the Greek world — appears in the signatures which certain coin-engravers of the fine-art periods affixed to their compositions. This practice shows that in these western regions the artistic value and the importance of coins were fully appreciated; and that the State strove to encourage artists of the highest ability and of established reputation to employ their talent in the production of a dignified and artistic coinage.

In the period of finest art these signatures were as a rule very minute and inconspicuous, being engraved, as we shall see, on the front of an amphyx, beneath a neck, on a dolphin's back, or on a tablet borne by a flying Nike. There was also a great diversity in the manner of writing the names. Sometimes one would appear in full, and again in abbreviated form;  $\Phi\Lambda\Lambda\Xi\tau\iota\omega\Nu$ ,  $\Phi\Lambda\Lambda\Xi\tau\iota$  and  $\Phi\Lambda$ ;  $\epsilon\Upsilon\mu\eta\Nu\omicron\Upsilon$  and  $\epsilon\Upsilon$ ;  $\epsilon\Upsilon\alpha\iota\Nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$  and  $\epsilon\Upsilon\alpha\iota\Nu$ ; sometimes a signature was written always at length,  $\mu\omicron\lambda\omicron\Xi\Xi\omicron\Xi$ ; or it was represented by the initial alone, as  $\Phi$ ,  $\Pi$  and  $\Delta$ .

At a later period in Magna Graecia the artists seem to have increased the size of their signatures, now always abbreviated, and to have placed them in more prominent positions. This departure from accepted custom caused until within a short time a grave error in their interpretation. Throughout the Greek world in early days it was the usage for the civic magistrate ruling at the time of a fresh coinage to place thereon a personal symbol as his official signet. Later, by the fourth century, this was supplemented or replaced by the magistrate's name or initials; always in large letters and occupying a prominent position in the field. So that the entire class represented by  $\Phi\Lambda$



and ΔΑΙ—referred to under Taras (No. 12) and Elea (No. 17)—was naturally supposed to consist of these magistrates' signatures. This was the accepted explanation until the appearance, in 1889, of the *Horsemen of Tarentum*, in which Mr. Evans demonstrated by an analysis of the similar styles prevailing on coins having the same signature, that these Magna Graecian initials must be those of die-sinkers. This strange innovation is explained by the theory that these die-sinkers were also private moneyers, and that they thus boldly placed on record their full responsibility for the fineness and accurate weight of the coin.

Admitting only the signatures which are indisputably those of engravers, we find less than fifty in all. The minuteness and delicacy of many of these names during the best art-periods show that the workmen must have been gifted with keen, trained vision, and accustomed probably from youth to working in the restricted and difficult field afforded by a coin-die or a gem. For, as has been pointed out, die-sinkers were often also gem-engravers; and we may consider the rarity (actual and comparative) of an artist's signature on a gem as additional evidence that the position of die-engraver was recognized by the State as a branch of its official life.

While certain of these artists confined their work to a single city, as ΕΥΚΛΕΙΔΑΣ at Syracuse, occasionally an enterprising engraver of wide repute would extend the field of his activity; as for instance Φ, whose charming and characteristic compositions appear at Thourioi, Terina, Elea and adjacent towns.

Unfortunately no mention of a die-engraver is made by any writer of antiquity, so that the details usually afforded by history regarding an artist, such as the date, place, and duration of his artistic career, must all be supplied from a comparative analysis of such examples of his work as have survived. It will be interesting however to examine the various signatures as they appear, with their aid to group the artists into schools of similar or widely divergent styles, and to consider such general information regarding them as it has been possible to collect, or to infer.

The coins shown on Plate III illustrate the four art-periods which succeeded the archaic; and exemplify the rise, the glory, and the decline of the art.

KROTON (BRUTII).

24. Stater, wt. 123 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. III : 1.) Obv. Eagle, standing to right, and flapping his wings. Rev.  $\eta$ PO Tripod; on left, laurel-leaf.  
(From the Bunbury sale.)

Again we have, as in our incuse Krotoniate example (Pl. I : 4), the bird of Zeus, the familiar of Pythagoras; but now presented in a charming attitude of easy activity which marks a wonderful advance in technical skill. The spirited nature of this type, as well as the strong, simple, dignified treatment of the tripod, show that our example must be a product of the closing years of the transitional period; shortly before the substitution, in inscriptions, of  $\kappa$  for the archaic  $\eta$ ,—a change which at Kroton took place toward the end of the fifth century. The laurel-leaf supplements the tripod in its constant symbolism of the protecting Apollo.

KROTON (BRUTII).

25. Stater, wt. 102 grs. B. C. 420-390. (Pl. III : 2.) Obv. Eagle with head turned back, standing to right on thunderbolt; on right, terminal figure of Hermes; magistrate's initials  $\Phi$ I. Rev. KPO Tripod, crowned by flying Nike on left.  
(From the Evans sale.)

In the small accessory type of this obverse we first meet with an example of the well-known Hermai. These were representations of the god Hermes, who was portrayed in early times simply by a rough, square block or column of stone, surmounted by a head. Such rude shapes, later, under the influence of a universal art-progression, imitated, first vaguely then with greater likeness, the human form; until finally they became as in the present instance draped but complete statues of the god; always preserving however a marked degree of archaistic stiffness reminiscent of their primitive origin. Our coin shows Hermes bearing in one hand his heraldic staff, and in the other a patera of sacrifice.

The deeply religious nature of the Greek was displayed in every act, public and private ; so that we need feel no surprise at learning that these symbolic statues of Hermes were familiar features, whether of the cities, where they stood at the doors of temples, tombs, and houses ; or of the country, where they defined the boundaries of States and private properties, marked the position of cross roads, and at times formed whole avenues. "The religious feeling of the Greeks considered the god to be planted or domiciliated where his statue stood, so that the companionship, sympathy and guardianship of Hermes" were ever-present, beneficent influences.

The strength of this feeling of religious veneration finds its clearest expression in the unexampled horror and dismay spread throughout Athens by the wholesale and mysterious mutilation of the city's Hermai, on the eve of her first expedition against Syracuse. The disasters and humiliations arising from that war seemed to the conscience-stricken Athenians a cruel but just Nemesis, inspired by this deity, outraged, indignant, and at last hopelessly implacable, as it became apparent how futile were to be all their strenuous and long-continued efforts to discover and punish the perpetrators of the sacrilege.

M. Sambon sees in each detail of this coin,—the war-like eagle standing in menacing attitude on the devastating thunderbolt of Zeus, the Hermes pouring forth a propitiatory libation, and the floating Nike, who crowns, through his tripod-symbol, the sun-god Apollo victorious over the serpent Python—a foreshadowing of the fierce struggle for independence which, as our next coin will show us, was to come to the Krotoniates, so soon, and with so disastrous a termination.

#### KROTON (BRUTTI).

26. Stater, wt. 120 grs. B. C. 390. (Pl. III : 3.) Obv. ΚΡΟΤΩΝΙΑΤΑΞ Head of Apollo to right, laureate, hair long and flowing. Rev. Infant Herakles, naked, seated on rock, facing, and strangling two serpents.

The reverse group, originating at Thebes about fifty years before this date, probably in its inception depicted simply another action in the life of

the great Theban hero, who furnished so many grand types for the coinage of his reputed birthplace. When, however, about 395 B. C. two great Hellenic alliances were concluded,—both directed against the unbearable oppression of Spartan rule,—one in Greece, between Thebes, Athens, Corinth, and Argos, the other in Asia between certain Greek cities of the mainland and islands; each adopted this coin-type, seemingly so appropriate in its symbolism “of the victory of light over darkness, of good over evil, and of free and united Hellas over barbarism and tyranny.”

Thus, when a few years later Kroton headed a confederation of Italiot cities seeking mutual protection against the threatened encroachments of Syracusan Dionysios on the one hand and the Lucanians on the other, it must have seemed of good omen that the coins issued by the leading city should bear a type which recalled such marked triumphs of right over might, of freedom over despotism. Such high hopes were, unfortunately, not destined for fulfillment, and the crushing defeat of the allied forces in 388 B. C. by Dionysios, placed at the tyrant's mercy Kroton as well as most of the Greek cities of Bruttii.

The head of Apollo now makes its first appearance on the Krotoniate coinage, either in place of or in conjunction with his symbol the tripod. Our obverse gives a noble example of the almost effeminate type with flowing hair.

#### KROTON (BRUTTII).

27. Stater, wt. 107 grs. B. C. 370–330. (Pl. III: 4.) Obv. Head of Apollo to right, laureate; hair long and flowing. Rev. KPO Tripod ornamented; on left, branch of laurel, filleted.

For twelve years after this capture Kroton is said to have been kept in subjection by a garrison of Dionysios, under whose despotic rule the city struck no coins. When at his death, a restored independence enabled it to enjoy again the right of coinage, the old types were revived; but now showing a soft delicacy and a complex ornateness, which clearly prefigure the weakness of decline.

## THOURIOI (LUCANIA).

28. Stater; wt. 122 grs. B. C. 420–390. (Pl. III : 5.) Obv. Head of Pallas to right, wearing crested Athenian helmet, ornamented with olive-wreath ; artist's signature  $\Phi$ . Rev.  $\Theta\omicron\Upsilon\Upsilon\iota\Omega\Nu$  Bull walking to left, with head lowered ; beneath, bird standing to left with spread wings ; in exergue, tunny-fish to left.

The coinage of Thourioi while not historically interesting is of the highest value when considered from an artistic standpoint. The mother-city, Athens, for reasons of commercial expediency, as will appear in a future paper, issued,—down to 322 B. C., the end of the civic coinage of “the old style”—series after series of coins totally deficient in artistic merit ; and preserving, in their reproduction of the primitive types (obverse, head of Pallas Athene) the stiff, rude, harsh, although later somewhat conventionalized, characteristics of the archaic period.

Among the Athenian colonists of Thourioi, there were doubtless many gem and coin-engravers, whose first task would be the production of a suitable coinage for the new foundation ; and who, hampered by no such restraints as at Athens, could here give free rein to their artistic instincts and sensibilities, trained and stimulated by long dwelling in the shadow of the transcendent art-products of “the ornament and the eye of Hellas.” Nor can these coin-artists be said to have proved unworthy of even such lofty influences and inspirations. The prototypal head of Pallas on the Athenian coin, with staring eye, rope-like locks, and antiquated features ; with in fact all the failings of a pronounced and intentional archaism, becomes transformed into a strong, pure, clear-featured divine likeness of Pallas Athene the virgin goddess, most suitably protected by the graceful, well-proportioned helmet of her peculiar city.

The reverse type is one of those examples of the fitness with which the details of an entire design were made to harmonize. The name Thourioi was derived from some copious springs which gushed forth on the city's site ; and the butting bull,  $\beta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \theta\omicron\upsilon\acute{\rho}\iota\omicron\varsigma$ , was, in Magna Graecia and Sicily, a recognized symbol of rushing waters ; which idea is still further conveyed by a fish

swimming beneath, so charmingly adapted to the exergue by its upward curving shape.

The artist who signs himself  $\Phi$  is one of the most familiar and charming of all the Italiot die-engravers, as well as one of the most prolific; specimens of his delicate, yet strong work appearing as has been already mentioned, at Terina, Herakleia and Elea, as well as at Thourioi.

THOURIOI (LUCANIA).

29. Distater, wt. 242 grs. B. C. 390–350. (Pl. III: 6.) Obv. Head of Pallas to right, wearing crested Athenian helmet, ornamented with Skylla; artist's signature  $\Delta$ l.  
(From the Hobart Smith sale.)

30. Stater, wt. 121 grs. B. C. 420–390. (Pl. III: 7.) Rev.  $\Theta\Omega\Upsilon\text{P}\text{I}\Omega\text{N}$  Bull butting to right; in exergue, tunny-fish to right; artist's signature  $\Phi\text{PY}$ .  
(From the Bunbury sale.)

31. Stater, wt. 119 grs. B. C. 390–350. (Pl. III: 8.) Obv. Similar to No. 29; but artist's signature E.

(From the Montagu sale.)

These heads exemplify the increasing ornateness characteristic of the fine-art periods, while the figure of Skylla seems peculiarly appropriate for the helmet decoration; both as illustrating an Italian myth, localized on the shore of the near-by Sicilian Strait, and as filling most pleasingly by its irregular shape the plain, rounded side of the helmet.

But even in this composition the intense love of beauty innate in the Greek shows itself. Homer's vivid and terrifying description of the loathsome monster who seized the unhappy companions of Odysseus, would have touched a sympathetic chord in the imagination of a Mediaeval or Renaissance artist, and have inspired a creation of horror and repugnance, while one can easily imagine the conscientious pains which would be devoted to the congenial task—if such were by chance suggested to him—by a designer of the far East, of China or Japan, whose traditional ideal seems the most startling and awe-inspiring grotesque. How different the Greek! In his

distaste for ugliness our die-engraver has subdued the horrible features, softened the repellent details, and emphasizing only the beauteous head and shape which had unfortunately aroused Kirke's jealous rage, has completed the subject with a figure of winding, dentate-edged curves, designed apparently only with the object of substituting a more ornate decoration for the simple olive-wreath of a severer art-period.

The bull on this reverse is distinctly later than the preceding one, displaying greater elaboration in treatment, and far more action. The signature  $\Phi\PY$ , it is conjectured by Mr. R. S. Poole, is thus written to distinguish this artist from his contemporary who signs  $\Phi$ . Nor can  $\Phi\PY$  be identified with  $\Phi\PY\Gamma\text{I}\Lambda\text{O}\Sigma$  of Syracuse, who is somewhat later, and whose style it will be seen shows far more simple severity.

#### HERAKLEIA (LUCANIA).

32. Stater, wt. 117 grs. B. C. 380-300. (Pl. III: 9) Obv. Head of Pallas to right, wearing crested Athenian helmet ornamented with Skylla. Rev.  $\text{HPAKA}\text{H}$  Herakles naked, standing to right, strangling lion; behind, club; between legs of Herakles, owl facing; artist's signature  $\text{KAA}$ .

(From the Montagu sale.)

33. Stater, wt. 122 grs. B. C. 380-300. (Pl. III: 10.) Rev.  $\text{HPAKA}\text{H}\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$  Herakles naked, standing facing, holding club, strung bow, arrow, and lion's skin; on left, one-handed vase, and artist's signature  $\text{A}\Theta\text{A}$ .

This city, a joint colony, as has been shown, of Thourioi and Taras in 432 B. C., rapidly assumed great importance owing to the influential position it occupied for nearly a century, as the seat of the general assembly of the Greek States of Italy. A natural choice for the obverse type of its artistic and copious coinage was the head of the Athenian Pallas, as adopted and transfigured by the mother-city Thourioi, with whose charming coins we are now familiar. Equally spontaneous is the presence, on the reverse, of the eponymous hero Herakles, either engaged in one of his most arduous labors, the strangling of the Nemean lion; or bearing the skin of this defeated antagonist, together with his own peculiar symbols. The agonistic group is a

superb composition, and must have been the work of a skillful gem-engraver, as evidenced not only by the power and symmetry of the design, but also by the minute and careful treatment of the muscles and general details. Special attention should also be paid to the gem-like sharpness and wonderful preservation of the pendent lion's skin on the second reverse; each individual claw being clearly distinguishable, as well as the difference between the fore and hind paws.

## NEAPOLIS (CAMPANIA).

34. Didrachm, wt. 115 grs. B. C. 340-268. (Pl. III: 11.) Obv. Head of nymph to right, diademed, wearing earring and necklace; around, four dolphins. Rev. (NEO)ΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ Man-headed bull to right, crowned by winged Nike.

(From the Bunbury sale.)

This flourishing and prosperous city in spite of its comparatively early absorption by the Romans, remained distinctively Greek, and seems to have been characterized by the same noisy, active, turbulent life, and to have displayed the same sharp contrasts of luxury and squalor, of wealth and poverty, as distinguish its descendant, the modern Naples. The Neapolitan coinage was copious; its obverse type being doubtfully interpreted, either as the head of the Siren Parthenope, the local goddess; or as that of Dia-Hebe, bride of the Dionysos Hebon whose embodiment as a man-headed bull forms the reverse type; and whose worship in this guise throughout South Italy has been alluded to already under the coin of Laos (Pl. I: 8). The constant presence of this peculiarly Campanian deity on the coinage of the greatest Campanian city was most appropriate; while his crowning by Nike probably symbolized the power and prosperity of Neapolis under the divine guidance.

This obverse is also of interest in one unusual particular, being an evident reproduction, slightly modified to accord with its fresh character, of the celebrated Syracusan Persephone-head by Euainetos; the influence of that admitted master-piece of the art of die-engraving,—as we shall see when delighting in the numismatic splendors of Dionysios' reign,—extended far and wide, not only into Italy, but also into many parts of old Greece. The



four dolphins, emblematic, on the prototype, of the sea-encircled island of Ortygia, the early foundation of Syracuse, have less fitness on a Neapolitan coin, and must here be considered simply as symbolic of a maritime situation.

A close examination of this coin will show two projections on opposite sides of the edge. These are valuable indications of the methods of producing blanks or *flans* for impression by the dies. The molten metal was poured into a series of moulds connected by narrow channels, in arrangement probably similar to our old fashioned bullet-moulds; and the chain of blanks when cool was simply broken up without any attempt being made to remove the channel marks. Such indications of casting are even more frequent on Sicilian coins than on those of Magna Graecia.

ARPI (APULIA).

35. Didrachm, wt. 109 grs. B. C. 217-213. (Pl. III: 12.) Obv. ΑΡΠΑΝΩΝ Head of Persephone to left, wearing wreath of barley, earring and necklace; behind, ear of barley. Rev. Free horse prancing to left; above, star; magistrate's name ΔΑΞΟΥ.

(From the Montagu sale.)

Livy, in the twenty-fourth book of his history, gives us a graphic story of the adventures of one Altinius Daxus, chief magistrate of Arpi during the Second Punic War, when this city was near the centre of military operations in Lower Italy. After the overwhelming defeat of the Romans at the battle of Cannae, Daxus, who is of course the magistrate of our coin, betrayed his city to Hannibal; of which act he seems to have repented, when a year or so later (B. C. 214) the success of the Roman cause appeared assured.

"To this (the Roman) camp came Altinius Daxus of Arpi privately and by night—with a promise that if he should receive a reward for it he would engage to betray Arpi to them." In spite of the natural distrust inspired by such two-fold treason, his offer was accepted. Arpi was captured, partly by this treachery, partly by storm; the family of Altinius were by Hannibal in revenge burned alive; and the wretched traitor himself was kept in captivity by the Romans.

This obverse shows us another imitation of the Euainetos head, but now degraded into a weak and slavish copy of the great original.

The bridleless horse always symbolized freedom; perhaps in this case the removal of the Roman yoke, which was to be brought about by the alliance with Hannibal.

TEANUM SIDICINUM (CAMPANIA).

36. Didrachm, wt. 111 grs. B. C. 280-268. (Pl. III: 13.) Obv. Head of young Herakles to right, wearing lion's skin; beneath, club. Rev. DUNAIT (in Oscan); Triga to left, driven by winged Nike; horses galloping.

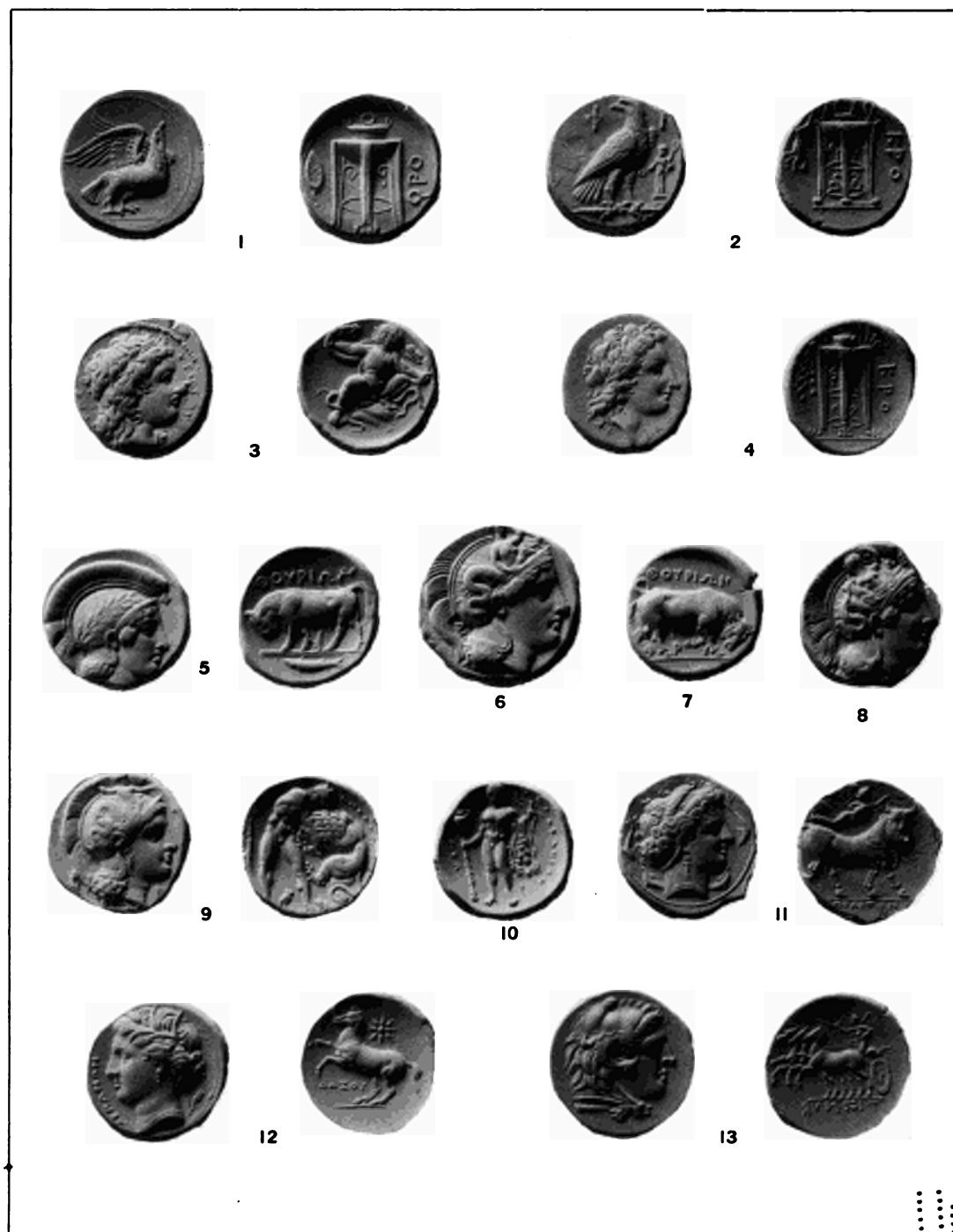
(From the Bunbury sale.)

This city probably issued no coins until after its alliance with Rome; the influence of which, so pernicious from an artistic standpoint, appears in the treatment of the reverse type.

The representation of a three-horse chariot is very rare. The third horse was fastened to the car by traces—the two yoke-horses being attached to the pole—and was intended to take the place of either of these latter which might be disabled in battle or by accident.







ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

70

# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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## IV TERINA. (MAGNA GRAECIA.)

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BY  
FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1901



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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

### IV. TERINA. (MAGNA GRAECIA.)

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THE great wave of colonization, which in the course of the eighth century B. C. rolled westward from Old Greece, seems to have expended its force on the eastern coasts of Sicily and South Italy, and to have had no reserve power for penetrating through the Sicilian strait to those fertile and attractive shores which bordered on the Tyrrhenian Sea. This sudden check to colonial enterprise finds simple explanation in the race jealousies which prevailed among these energetic growing settlements of various origins. The narrow, turbulent current which separates the main land from the great island, was carefully guarded on either side by Rhegium and Messana (Zankle), — both of Ionic descent like the neighboring Sicilian towns, — and their watchful hostility prevented the hated Achaian states of Magna Graecia from obtaining any access to the further waters: while, on the other hand, the prevalence of Etruscan piracy, and the dangers, fabulous and real, of the navigation, discouraged even the Ionians from penetrating far beyond their own twin guardian cities.

But the beauties and advantages of this coast, with its rich alluvial plains sheltered on the north and east by mountain ranges, with an equable climate tempered by sea-breezes, mild in winter, cool and refreshing in sum-



mer, and with many a sheltered river-mouth where the shallow bark of the Greek coaster might be drawn up in safety against the cruelty of man or of the tempestuous sea, could not long remain unrecognized or neglected. Thus we find those great rival cities of the eastern shore, Sybaris and Kroton, establishing here, during the sixth century, several sea-coast colonies, which should extend and protect their already active trade in these western waters.

Among the most important of these, in commerce, in civilization, and in art, must have been the subject of this paper. It is fortunate that, as I have shown, numismatic evidence is of such value in corroborating and supplementing history; for few cities are so dependent upon coins for even a general idea of their civic life and conditions as Terina, of which there is hardly any mention by ancient writers during the flourishing period of *Magna Graecia*. We read that it was colonized from Kroton; that as an ally of the Tarentines it took part in the war with the Thourians about 435 B. C., and again that it fell into the hands of the conquering Dionysios together with so many of the South Italian towns, in 388, — an important date, as this conquest terminated the local coinage. We feel therefore little interest in its subsequent story, which indeed in no way differs from that of its Italian neighbors, — capture by the Bruttii, deliverance by Alexander of Epeiros, and recapture after his death. Even its site has not been positively identified, although it was undoubtedly some spot on the gulf called *Sinus Terinaeus*.

Since it is in the beauty, variety and copiousness of its coinage — comparative, that is, for Terina could never have been a large place — that we find attested the high state of this city's artistic refinement, as well as the flourishing condition of its trade, we should give even more than usual care to our consideration of the charming specimens on Plate IV.

It will be noticed that the arrangement of coins on this plate differs from that adopted for the former three; all obverses being shown first, and the reverses by themselves below. The reason for this is two-fold; it is found principally in the simplicity, or if it may be so termed, the unity of the companion types, each of which continued with absolutely no alteration, except in treatment, for the century of the city's coinage. Such sameness of subject

seemed to require that the obverse heads should be placed together so as to display to the best advantage those gradual changes from the severity of the transitional to the ornateness of the fine-art period; while the many charming attitudes and occupations of our Nike are best appreciated and enjoyed when there is no contrasting obverse type to break the spell.

Again, the Terinaian coins, to a greater extent perhaps than is the case with any other Greek series, show the disfiguring marks of carelessness on the part of the coin-striker. In a majority of instances these coins are not well centered; some are double-struck; and of many, the dies must have been badly oxidized. So that, as it is the rarest occurrence to find a specimen of which both sides display an equally fine state of preservation, I thought best to select for illustration the most perfect obverse or reverse, regardless of the condition of its companion type. Three coins, however, are complete, Nos. 6 and 11; 7 and 12; 9 and 17. But this very absence of care in the production of its coinage is still another evidence of the high development attained in all branches of art by the dwellers in once prosperous but long forgotten Terina. And, as in other cities where we find the same conditions, such a spirit of indifference is only one of many indications that the Greek workman did not labor to create artistic and beautiful designs, which should hand down his name and fame to future ages. His principal object was commercial; to furnish a coinage suitable for use in trading, and distinguished by the well-known civic types; while it was only the superabundance of his artistic ideas, his intense passion for beauty of all kinds and in all things, which inspired the humble die-engraver to the production of works rivalling, if allowance be made for their minute and restricted sphere, the compositions of renowned sculptors and painters.

#### TERINA (BRUTTII).

37-45. Staters, wts. 124-110 grs. B. C. 470-388. Obv. TEPINAION or TEPI-  
NAION Head of nymph to right or to left, with varied arrangement of hair, and some-  
times with a border of olive-wreath or of dots; artists' initials  $\Phi$ ,  $\Pi$  or  $\Delta$ . (Pl. IV:  
1-9.)

46-59. Rev. TEPINAION Winged Nike seated or standing to left or to right, on various supports, in different attitudes, and engaged in a variety of occupations; artists' initials Φ or Π. (Pl. IV: 10-23.)

(From the Montagu, Bunbury, Evans and other sales.)

We must first briefly survey the sub-divisions of this century of coinage. The earliest issue (B. C. 480-470) presents obverse and reverse types similar to those on our plate, but of archaic design and with a wingless Victory (Nike Apteros). This coin is of the highest rarity, and unfortunately no example has yet been secured for our collection. An interesting and probably earlier Terinaian coin will however be examined at length when we come to consider the subject of Alliance coins. It is of the *incuse* variety, and bears on each side the Krotoniat type, a tripod; the relief of the obverse dividing the inscription ῬΡΟ-ΤΕ. This has usually been considered an alliance coin of Kroton and Temesa; but Sir Edward Bunbury, from whose grand collection it came, and whose authority on ancient geography and numismatics was unquestioned, always claimed that ΤΕ were the initials of Terina. This attribution seems by far the more plausible when we consider the greater importance of Terina, and its probably closer relations with the protecting mother-city. As additional proof we find that the few coins of Temesa itself bear for inscription ΤΕΜ, and for type a helmet.

The next period extending from B. C. 470 to 440, includes coins (Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 7) of which the heads show the usual traits of severity and simple strength; while the reverse type (No. 12) bears marks of technical uncertainty—an inheritance from the archaic age—and of groping after a perfection attained only in the succeeding period. This latter, embracing the next forty years, brought the fifth century to a close; and in its heads (notably No. 8) we are struck with the more careful design and finish; while the reverse type with its varied, charming, graceful treatment of the youthful Nike—all but 17 and 18 belong to this time—displays the freshest imagination and the perfection of technique.

The head No. 9 and the reverses Nos. 17 and 18 are examples of the detailed elaboration which prevails for the remaining twelve years of civic

freedom, from 400 to 388, the year when Dionysios in the course of his irresistible career throughout Magna Graecia captured Terina. Of this final period one specimen (Nos. 9 and 17), is worthy of special attention, both as showing in its inscription the change from O to the Ionic Ω, and as presenting by its doubly perfect state a rare exception to the usually poor condition, already noted, of one or the other side of a Terinaian coin.

Of the nymph Terina we find no mention in the Greek mythology, and it must be confessed that when the representations of this goddess as pictured in the imagination of these doubtless reverent die-engravers are placed side by side, it would seem that even to her ancient votaries she did not present a distinct and unchanging personality. The same criticism can however be passed upon the charming collection of heads of the Syracusan goddess Persephone or of the nymph Arethousa, each of which varies in feature and expression according to the conception of the individual coin-artist; while just as in these latter instances, the variety here shown in the modes of arranging the hair possesses a certain human as well as archaeological interest. Especially is this the case when we compare the changes from the formal, severe *saccos* of No. 1 to the wavy, luxuriant and yet well-ordered tresses of No. 9, confined by a graceful star-spangled *sphendone*.

But it is the treatment of their reverse type which stamps the issues of Terina as of the highest artistic merit, and which seizes and holds our willing attention. We see the winged Nike—chosen, for what reason it is unknown, as the city's type—in various graceful and natural postures; now seated on a four-legged stool, a cippus, or an overturned hydria; now standing against a supporting column,—a device so often adopted for sculpture in the round,—or leaning forward with one foot raised upon a step. Nor do her occupations show less variety and grace. Sometimes she is practicing a playful legerdemain, alternately tossing into the air, and catching on the back of her hand two balls; sometimes she bears a wreath, or more often as the herald of victory, the caduceus of Hermes; or she caressingly smiles at a bird which lightly rests on her extended finger.

But surely the most charming of all these pleasing figures is No. 16, where the enchanting youthful goddess, delicately poised on an overturned hydria, seems absorbed in the task of training a bird, confidently perched on her left forefinger, and playfully threatened with the raised caduceus which she holds in her right hand. The exquisite pose, the sportive gesture, the tender, feminine outlines, accentuated by the semi-transparent drapery blown backward by a light breeze or the rapidity of her descent, embody our highest ideals of refined purity and poetic grace. As by an inspiration the artist has so disposed the upper part of the left wing as to form a nimbus for the dainty goddess head; while a final touch of harmonious spontaneity is given by a flower which springs up from the watered earth at the mouth of the hydria. In this figure, as in fact in all those of the series, we see proof of the Greek aptness in seizing upon favorable artistic conditions; the inner side of the wings where the feathers are longer and more gracefully arranged, being always shown.

In No. 23, the Nike of the fountain, we find a more elaborate work, encroaching it must be confessed too closely upon the realm of painting to win our entire approbation from the standpoint of pure numismatic art. The oxidation of the die from which most existing examples of this special type were struck—this being the clearest and most presentable of three in our collection, and the British Museum specimens being equally unsatisfactory—should make us charitably eager to use the forbearance already petitioned for, as well as to exercise that “sympathetic imagination,” which would reproduce the design fresh from the die-sinker’s tool. Nike seated on a square cippus balances, by leaning on a caduceus held in her left hand, the weight of a hydria supported on her right knee. Into the mouth of this jar water pours from a lion-head fountain, in the basin of which a swan is swimming; while in the background are visible the interstices of a stone wall; its cornice being utilized to bear the inscription *TEPINA*, an unusual form. The whole completes a composition which, while well-balanced and pleasing, is too detailed and complicated to give us the true satisfaction with which simpler and more appropriate designs fill our minds.

On the side of the cippus can be read—clearly when one examines the actual coin—a vertical inscription ΑΓΗ, which the suggestion of Mr. Millingen would refer to the stream Ares flowing near Terina, and symbolized by the fountain. I venture to propose a simpler, and in my opinion, more probable explanation. The cippus, used principally as a sepulchral monument, was of Latin origin, and doubtless familiarity caused its adoption by the Italiots in place of the upright slab or *stèle* peculiar to the mother-country. The inscriptions, however, would be in the tongue of Magna Graecia; and it seems not unlikely that this word ΑΓΗ may have thus appeared on cippi in its sense of “awe or reverence,” most fitting in any connection with the Greek’s undefined and dread-inspiring ideas of a future state. Thus our coin-engraver thought to complete his design of a cippus by this word, to him a familiar and suitable one.

No. 18, easily identified as of the latest period, displays a different character. Here the figure may be the nymph Terina holding forth a patera, as she offers a sacrifice; while the flying Nike, subordinated to a painful degree, and diminutive in size, finds occupation in meekly crowning the nymph, who dominates the composition. This latter displays the charms of a ripe maturity, and is wholly wanting in the airy grace which has been such a constant and fascinating trait of Nike.

It will be noticed that certain of these reverses as well as several of the heads are the work of artists who sign themselves Φ and Π. The former is already familiar to us (No. 28, Thourioi), and Mr. R. S. Poole in a most interesting paper on “Athenian Coin-Engravers in Italy” (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1883), has shown that the engravers of many of these works of the third period—after 440 B. C.—were doubtless those Athenian die-sinkers, who had initiated the charming coinage of Thourioi, and who following the example set by their home-city in all the artistic and literary creations of Hellas, exercised a powerful and wide-spread influence over Italiot civic coinages. The learned author goes indeed further than this, emphasizing the likeness which these Terinaian winged Victories bear to the graceful figure-poses on the balustrade of the contemporaneous temple of Nike Apteros at Athens.



The strength of this comparison will at once forcibly impress one who compares Nos. 16 or 20, for instance, with the Athenian Victory binding her sandal, a bas-relief made so familiar to us by casts. There are the same lightness and perfection of pose, the same graceful drapery disposed in transparent floating folds which veil but do not hide the forms and contours, with the same variety and yet harmony in posture and occupation. Not that our Italian coin-artists in designing their own compositions copied these Athenian bas-reliefs. Such servile imitation was reserved for the later and weaker periods of Greek coinage. It is probable that, as Mr. Poole suggests, the treatment of both these classes of art, coins as well as reliefs, was the expression of some marked peculiarity of style or school, which, remaining impressed upon the far-distant yet still home-loving workmen, exercised an influence as strong as it was unconscious upon their productions.

Returning for a moment to the Terinaian artists, we find in the work of  $\Pi$  a certain imitateness and a want of originality which stamp him as probably a pupil and copyist of the greater  $\Phi$ , whose versatile productivity has been extolled under Thourioi.

We have already when discussing the interesting Kauloniatic reverse No. 11 (Pl. II: 3), touched upon the Greek devotion to nature, — a feeling, the strength of which, among the ever-youthful and pleasure-loving denizens of Magna Graecia and Sicily, is displayed most fully in these delicate compositions of Terina. Their subtle and peculiar fascination cannot be more happily expressed than in the words of Professor Percy Gardner, when himself under the charm of this Nike. "She seems in fact at Terina to embody the fresh gladness of nature, and the sportive joy of open-air life in a soft and genial region. Above all Greeks the people of South Italy seem to have loved birds and insects and flowers, all of which actually swarm on their coins, just as they do in the seventh Idyll of Theocritus, the scene of which is laid most appropriately at Velia."

And we must complete our illustration by the addition of a few lines from this Idyll, in the tuneful and sympathetic English of Mr. Lang's prose

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translation; who however places the scene in the isle of Kos and not in Magna Graecia:

"And high above our heads waved many a poplar, many an elm tree, while close at hand the sacred water from the nymph's own cave welled forth with murmurs musical. On shadowy boughs the burnt cicalas kept their chattering toil; far off the little owl cried in the thick thorn brake, the larks and finches were singing, the ring-dove moaned, the yellow bees were flitting about the springs. All breathed the scent of opulent summer."

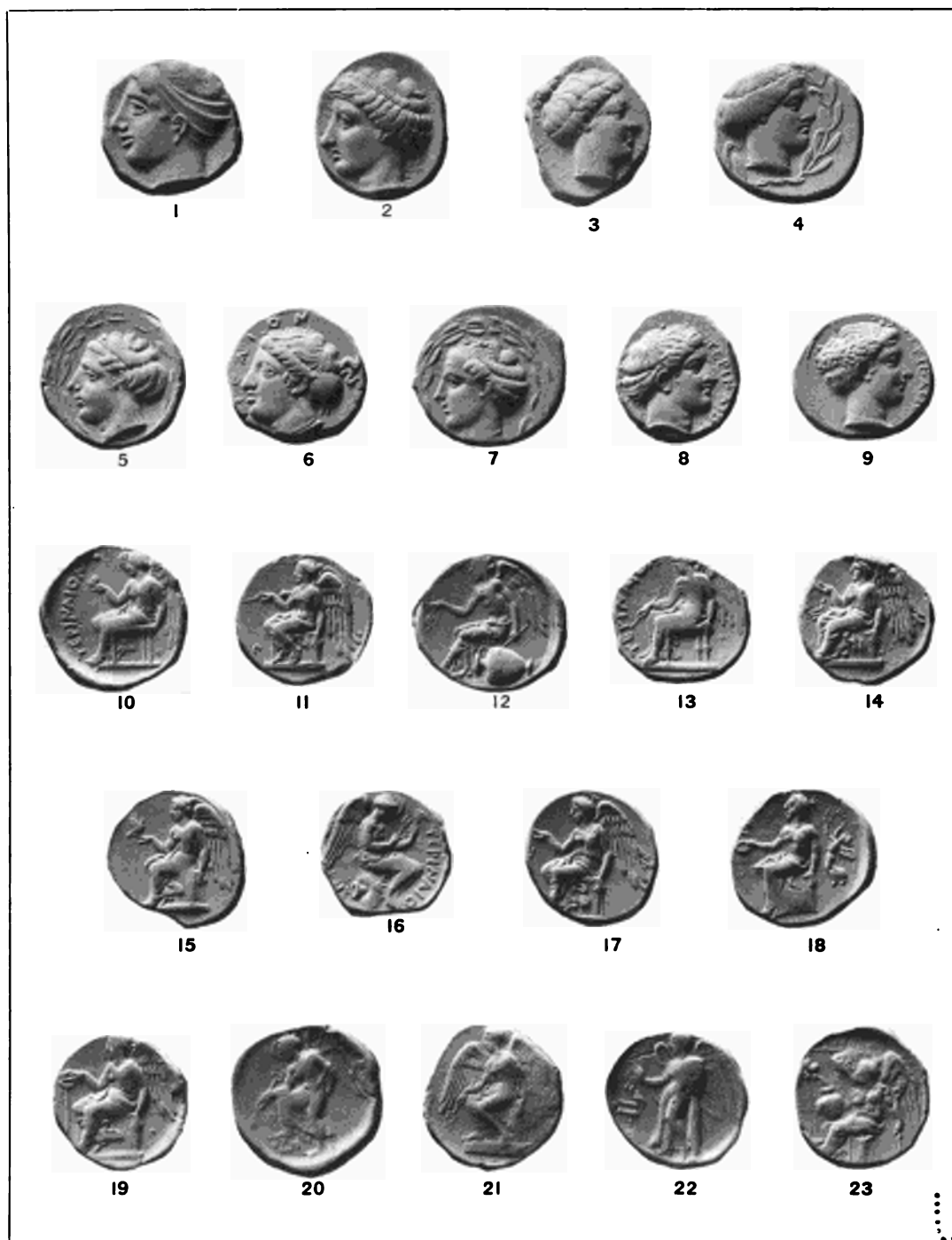
One cannot claim for these charming designs the strength and majesty of Elis, the power, variety and dignity of Syracuse; but in these days of a fierce struggle for material gain, when a sordid and selfish utilitarianism is the motive-power, the watchword, and almost the religion of so large a part of mankind, can we not dwell with pleasure and profit upon these evidences of grace, purity and refinement which have been preserved to us from a distant age; and should we not with thankful hearts hope and feel that even such seemingly delicate qualities may give strength and courage to those who would strive in defence of divine righteousness against the ceaseless assaults of rampant, malignant evil?

This sketch of the Terinaian series, the most beautiful, taken as a whole, in Italy, completes our consideration of the coinage of Magna Graecia; and we shall next, following the accepted numismatic arrangement, proceed to a study of Sicilian coins. Their issues will be found to possess no less variety and interest than those of the mainland, and even to surpass the Italian examples in boldness of design, beauty of style and delicacy of treatment. But one among Sicilian cities,—the great, powerful, magnificent Syracuse,—shows so decided a pre-eminence in these features, as well as in historical and literary interests, as naturally to claim our first attention; and to its coinage—as exemplified in my collection—the next five papers will be devoted.

JUL 5 1919







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